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PREFACE

122 THIS book contains some part of the results of anthropological research carried out in the Andaman Islands in the years 1906 to 1908, under the terms of the Anthony Wilkin Studentship in Ethnology of the University of Cambridge. The funds supplied by the studentship were supplemented by grants from the Royal Society and from the government of India. In its original form the monograph was presented as a fellowship thesis at Trinity College. The work of rewriting it was interrupted by absence from England and was only completed in 1914. There has since been a long delay in publication as a result of the war.

127 The book deals with the social institutions of the tribes of the Great Andaman. These had previously been studied by Mr E. H. Man to whose work I have been obliged to make many references in order that my account may be as complete as
114 possible. I should have preferred to devote my attention almost exclusively to the natives of the Little Andaman, about whom very little is known. I found, however, that it was not possible in the time at my disposal to do any satisfactory work amongst these people owing to the difficulty of language. The natives of
197 the Little Andaman know no language but their own, and that is so little related to the languages of the Great Andaman that even a thorough knowledge of the latter is of almost no use in an attempt to learn the former. I spent nearly three months camped with natives of the Little Andaman, giving most of the time to learning their language. No one who has not actually made the attempt to learn the language of a savage people without the help of an interpreter, can form an adequate idea of the difficulties of the task. At the end of three months I found that at the same rate of progress it would take me two or three years to learn to speak the language sufficiently well to begin to

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question the natives about their customs and beliefs and understand their answers. I was therefore regretfully compelled to give up the idea of making a study of the people of the Little Andaman, and devoted the remainder of my time to the study of the tribes of the Great Andaman, particularly those of the North Andaman among whom Mr Man had not worked. I kept one boy from the Little Andaman with me for some months in the hope that he would learn sufficient Hindustani to act as an interpreter and so enable any future investigator to begin work with the great advantage that I had lacked.

In my work amongst the natives of the Great Andaman I at first made use of Hindustani, which the younger men and women all speak more or less imperfectly, and gradually acquired a knowledge of the dialects of the North Andaman. Towards the end of my stay in the islands I was able to obtain the services as interpreter of a man of the *Akar-Bale* tribe who spoke English well and was of considerable intelligence. He is shown in the photographs of Plates V and XIII. With his help I was able to do some work with the *Akar-Bale* and *A-Pučikwar* tribes, and I found that with such an interpreter I was able to obtain much fuller and more reliable results than I could by using my own knowledge of the native language supplemented by Hindustani. If I had had his services from the outset my work would have been much easier and more thorough.

The results of my researches on the physical anthropology of the Andaman Islanders have not been published. I hoped to be able to obtain the services of some one more competent in such matters than myself to assist or direct me in the measurement and study of the collection of skulls and skeletons that I brought to England and that is now in the Anthropological Museum at Cambridge. In this I was disappointed, and absence from England has prevented me from completing my work in this branch of research.

The languages of the Andaman Islands are chiefly of interest as affording material for the study of comparative grammar and

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177 are employed in collecting trepang (bêche de mer) under the direction of petty officers, who are natives of India or Burma. The trepang, together with wild honey and shells collected by the Andamanese, is sold, and the money is devoted to the service of the Andamanese Department. There is also a grant of money from the Government of India, in return for which the Officer in Charge must, when necessary, provide Andamanese to track and capture any convicts who may run away from the Penal Settlement. The funds thus made available serve to provide the natives with blankets, cloth, iron tools and scrap iron, rice, sugar, tea and tobacco. The result of this system is that there is a free circulation of natives in all parts of the Great Andaman. Whereas, formerly, the natives kept carefully to their own part of the country, they now make long journeys, either in their own canoes, or in Government launches, and members of the northern tribes are to be found at Port Blair and elsewhere in the south, while men and women of the southern tribes are to be found engaged in collecting trepang in the north.

The natives of the Little Andaman have as yet scarcely been affected by these changes. Within recent years, however, some of the natives of the northern part of the Little Andaman have been in the habit of making periodical visits to Rutland Island in their canoes, and occasionally come as far as Port Blair. Their chief reason for visiting the Settlement is to obtain iron for their arrows and adzes, but they have also begun to appreciate sugar and tobacco.

•114 The manners and customs of the Andaman Islanders have formed the subject of a number of writings. By far the most important of these is a work by Mr E. H. Man, who was for some years an officer of the Penal Settlement of Port Blair, and for four years of that time was in charge of the Andamanese Home. Mr Man made a special study of the language of the *Aka-Bea* tribe and compiled an extensive vocabulary, which, however, has never been published. His observations on the manners and customs of this tribe and others of the South Andaman were published in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* of the year 1882 (Volume XII), and were reprinted in the form of a book *On the Aboriginal Inhabitants of the*

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Andaman Islands. As the reprint is difficult to obtain, the references to Mr Man's work in the chapters that follow are all to the pages of the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, Volume XII. 114

Another writer on the Andamanese is Mr M. V. Portman, who was for some years an officer of the Andaman Commission, and was for a long time in charge of the Andamanese. His *Manual of the Andamanese Languages*, London, 1887, is full of errors and entirely unreliable. A later work, entitled *Notes on the Languages of the South Andaman Group of Tribes*, Calcutta, 1898, is of much greater value, and though not entirely free from errors, is on the whole useful and accurate. Mr Portman has also compiled *A History of Our Relations with the Andamanese* (2 volumes, Calcutta, 1899), which contains a mass of information on the subject with which it deals, but does not add very much to our knowledge of the Andamanese themselves. The British Museum possesses an excellent collection of photographs of the Andamanese taken by Mr Portman.

A good general description of the islands and of their inhabitants by Colonel Sir Richard Temple, who was for many years Chief Commissioner of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, is contained in Volume III of the *Census of India*, 1901, here referred to as "Census Report" 1901.

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PREFACE.

In a paper which I was invited to read before the Anthropological Institute on 24th May, 1880, I mentioned that it was my purpose to submit to their Council a monograph then in course of preparation on the aboriginal inhabitants of the Andaman Islands which would embody the results of observations which I had made during my residence in those Islands from 1869–1880.

The exceptional advantages I enjoyed for making careful and systematic study of various matters of ethnological interest will be readily recognised when it is known that for four successive years I had charge of the "Homes" erected by Government with a view to establishing more cordial relations between the aborigines and ourselves, and reclaiming them, if possible, to some degree of civilisation.

Being thus thrown constantly in contact, in the performance of my duties, with members of the various tribes who from time to time visited the Homes, special facilities were afforded me of preparing a vocabulary[1] of the language, which eventually contained some 6,000 words, of the *bō·jig-ngī·ji-*, or South Andaman dialect with numerous illustrative phrases and a comparative table of several hundred words of most of the other dialects spoken in Great Andaman. Having thus acquired a colloquial knowledge of the *bō·jig-ngī·ji-* language, I proceeded to collect as much information as possible in respect to the habits and customs of these savages, regarding whom only a few brief descriptive memoirs had appeared, leaving therefore a wide field for further research. In this interesting task I was greatly assisted by the excellent Manual of Anthropological Notes and

[1] This I hope to arrange for publication as soon as I can find sufficient leisure for the purpose.

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114 Queries drawn up by a committee appointed in 1872 by the British Association for the Advancement of Science; for I was thereby enabled to work on clearly defined lines.

The value of such systematic guidance as is afforded by this Manual can only be appreciated by those who have endeavoured to collect information from savages concerning the multifarious subjects possessing interest to ethnologists. I can but express my grateful acknowledgments to Lieut.-General Pitt Rivers, F.R.S. (secretary to the committee above referred to, and one of the principal contributors to the Manual) for having made me acquainted with the volume soon after the appearance of the first edition, which fortunately was coincident with my first experiencing the need of such a work.

I think it is due to the reader as well as to myself to explain that on all points where there appeared the least risk of falling into error, by directing inquiries among those long resident in our midst, I took the precaution of substantiating my observations by seeking information on such matters from natives of distant villages who from time to time happened to visit our Settlement; but in every instance, whatever the nature of the communication or the character of my informant, I recognised the necessity and importance of testing through other channels the truth and accuracy of every detail before finally accepting it.

000 During 1882[1] three evenings of the Anthropological Institute's session were devoted to the reading and discussion of portions of the paper which I had by that time prepared, and these have since appeared *in extenso* in the Institute's Journal for August and November, 1882, and February of the following year.

The division of the work into three parts[2] will thus be explained to the reader, while for convenience' sake I have, with the concurrence of the Council—to whom I am mainly indebted for the publication as a separate volume of this reprint from

[1] Viz., March 7th, April 25th, June 27th, 1882.

[2] In consequence of this arrangement it was found necessary to number the paragraphs so as to allow of references to the several sections in Parts 1, 2, and 3, the pagination of which it would have been impossible to ascertain in time for purposes of citation.

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PART II.

Language—Adoption—Relationships—Proper Names—Initiatory Ceremonies—Marriage—Death and Burial—Meeting and Parting, &c.—Fire—Superstitions—Religious Beliefs and Demonology—Mythology.

BEFORE we enter upon the consideration of the marital relations customs, superstitions, traditions, and beliefs of these aborigines, I wish to say a few words in reference to the dialects or languages spoken by the various tribes, more especially the language spoken by the *bō̈jig-ngī̈ji-*, or South Andaman tribe. As I shall presently show, the people themselves have a legend[1] to account for the linguistical distinctions existing in their midst; but, on a subject of such importance as the origin of an unwritten language, the traditions current among the savages who speak it have rarely, if ever, I believe, been known to throw any light.

Language.—1. A few short lists of Andamanese words have been prepared from time to time, commencing, I think, with Colebrooke, who visited the islands nearly a century ago; but

[1] *Vide post* "Mythology," paragraphs 14 and 22.

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owing to a variety of circumstances, not the least of which was the absence of any system of representing the sounds in the language—each author having chosen to employ a phonetic code best understood by himself and capable of varying interpretation by others—the result has been, to say the least, unsatisfactory, and the words for the most part are, in their printed form, either wholly unrecognisable by the people themselves, or possess a meaning differing very much from that given.

2. I do not make these remarks with a view of depreciating the efforts of others, for I fully recognise the difficulties with which they had to contend, and am aware that these exceeded any I have had to overcome, consequent on the improved relations which have subsisted between ourselves and the aborigines in recent years.

3. It must also be borne in mind that time necessarily works vast changes in all savage languages, which depend so entirely upon the oral correctness of the whole population for their accurate transmission.

4. As my knowledge of the other dialects is not as yet sufficient for me to be able to describe them comparatively at any length—leisure having failed me to obtain more than a few hundred words of five of the seven remaining tribes of Great Andaman—I wish it to be understood that, except where otherwise stated, my remarks refer to the *.bō·jig-ngī·ji-*, or South Andaman dialect.

5. The Andamanese are, as a rule, very conservative, and prefer to coin from their own resources rather than to borrow from aliens, words expressing ideas or objects which are new to them. To give only one of many examples:—having themselves no forms of worship, they had no word for "prayer," but since seeing the Mahomedans at their daily devotions, and learning that they are addressing an Invisible Being, they express the act by a compound word, *â·rlalik-yâ·b-*, signifying "daily repetition" (viz.: *â·rla-* daily, and *ik-yâ·b-* repetition).

6. They have also a distinct poetical dialect, and in their songs subordinate everything to rhythm, the greatest liberties being thereby taken not only with the forms of their words, but even with the grammatical construction of the sentences. For instance the chorus of one of their songs runs thus:—

chĕ̄klū yá lak-u mēj·rà?

which means "who missed the hard (backed) turtle?" the prose construction of the sentence being *mij·a yá·dī chē·balen lá·kàchī·re?* It will be at once noticed how great is the difference between the two versions, for in this, as in most of their songs,

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but widows generally marry again when the prescribed term has passed: this is not altogether due to inconstancy on the part of the fair (!) sex, but to the custom, to which allusion has before been made, which all but compels a bachelor or widower to propose to the childless widow of his elder brother or cousin (if she be not past her prime),[1] while she has no choice beyond remaining single or accepting him; should she have no younger brother-in-law (or cousin by marriage), however, she is free to wed whom she will.[2]

17. A young widow who is childless usually returns to the home of her girlhood; but, if elderly, she lives in one of the huts set apart for spinsters, and those who, situated like herself, are eligible for matrimony; during the period of her widowhood it devolves on one of her senior male relatives to act as her guardian; it is not considered decorous that any fresh alliance should be contracted until about a year has elapsed from the date of bereavement.

18. In the case of a widow who has children, it is customary for her to remain in the same community and keep house for her family; during widowhood—if her husband had been a chief or elder—she continues to enjoy the privileges accorded her in his lifetime. Should she re-marry and her husband happen to be a bachelor, or widower "without encumbrances," it is usual for him to join her community, and live in her hut, but if they both have families it becomes a matter of arrangement between them which establishment shall be given up.

19. Some idea of the erroneous views formerly held respecting their marital relations will be gathered from the following extracts:—(*a*) "There is promiscuous intercourse save with the parent, which only ceases in regard to the woman when she is allotted as wife to a man, but is retained as the prerogative of the male sex."[3] (*b*) "Marriage, as we understand the word, is unknown to them, and there seem to be few restrictions of consanguinity, a mother and her daughter being sometimes the wives of the same husband."[4] A similar statement appears in Dr. Brown's work, and the source of both is probably to be found in the following passage in Dr. Mouat's book, in which he publishes several extraordinary stories told by an escaped

[1] It should be added that marriage with a deceased wife's younger sister is equally a matter of necessity on the part of a *childless* widower.

[2] A case of this kind came under my notice where a young man living at one of the homes was reluctantly married to the widow of an elder brother, or cousin, who was considerably his senior, and innocent of any attractions. This *mariage de convenance* proved by no means a happy one, though, so far as could be judged, neither had any just cause of complaint against the other.

[3] *Vide* Mouat.

[4] *Vide* Wood.

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114 convict Sepoy, named *Dúdhnáth*,[1] who had apparently spent about thirteen months with the aborigines, during the first two years of our settlement at Port Blair (1858-59):—"A man named *Pooteeah*, who doubtless considered him (*Dúdhnáth*) a desirable match, offered to bestow upon him, in what they called wedlock, his daughter *Hessa*, a young woman of twenty years of age, whose attractions were doubtless regarded as considerable among her native tribe, and a mere girl named *Zigah*, a daughter of *Hessa*, who, in that eastern part of the world, was considered quite old enough[2] for the state of marriage. As they were by no means troubled with an uneasy amount of virtue they made no objection to being assigned to the Brahmin soldier in the most unceremonious manner. The two, mother and daughter, at once recognised him as their husband." . . . .

20. The main feature of interest in this story is, however, somewhat marred when it is discovered that the woman (*.lī·pa*[3]), who was well known to us for many years subsequent to the establishment of the homes, was a girl of not more than seventeen at the time of *Dúdhnáth*'s escape, and that she had never been a mother prior to her marriage with him.[4] The child (*.yē·ga*, not *Zigah*) was merely living under *Lī·pa's* protection, and was employed, like all children, in helping to supply the wants of her guardians. The fact of child marriages—not to mention bigamy and concubinage—being quite unknown among them, affords additional support to this statement, which is the result of careful inquiry.

21. *Dúdhnáth* being of course aware of the ignorance which prevailed at the time regarding the habits and customs of the Andamanese, appears to have availed himself of the opportunity thus afforded him of drawing largely on his imagination, probably with the object of exciting as much interest as possible in his adventures, and perhaps also of amusing himself with the wonder created by his narrative. Some of his unrecorded[5] stories seem, however, to have been still more

[1] Of all who absconded on this occasion it appears that he was so fortunate as to be the only one who was spared by the aborigines, his companions being shot down as soon as they were discovered.

[2] *Vide ante*, "Development and Decay," paragraph 3, and "Reproduction," paragraph 1.

[3] This was her name. There is no name at all resembling *Hessa* in the language (*vide* Appendix H).

[4] In his report for the month of December, 1866, the officer in charge of the Andaman homes stated that on *Dúdhnáth's* desertion of her "she was called *Modo*, which signifies a deserted bride, or a woman that has lost her husband while young, and before becoming a mother." [N.B.—*.mō·da* (not *Modo*) is one of the twelve "flower" names borne by all young women (married and single) until they become mothers (*vide* "Proper Names," paragraph 3, and Appendix H.)]

[5] "Our friend the Sepoy tells some remarkable exploits of the Mincopie in

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highly coloured, and failed, therefore, in imposing on the almost excusable credulity which existed at a time when next to nothing of a trustworthy nature was known concerning these savages.

22. With regard to a deceased husband's property, the widow disposes of everything, which she does not require for her personal use, among his male relatives.

23. It seems superfluous to add that no such custom as *suttee* prevails or has ever been known to exist among them.

Death and Burial.—1. Amongst other erroneous opinions held regarding these tribes is that which declares that "no lamentation is publicly made at death," whereas, in point of fact, the demonstrations of grief on such occasions are generally excessive, and are shared, in a greater or less degree, by every member of the community in which the melancholy event occurs.

2. In the case of an infant, the parents and relatives remain weeping for hours beside the corpse; afterwards they smear their persons with a wash composed of *ōg-* (the common olive-coloured clay) and water, and, after shaving their heads, place a lump of the same, called *del·a-*, just above their foreheads,[1] where it hardens, and is left, much to the individual's discomfort, until the expiration of the days of mourning;[2] should it fall off in the meantime it is renewed.

3. The burial usually takes place within 18 hours of the decease, which time is spent by the mother in painting the head, neck, wrists, and knees of her dead child with *kòi·ob-* and *tâ·la-ōg-*; she also shaves off the hair, and folds the little limbs so as to occupy the least possible space,[3] the knees being brought up to the chin and the fists close to the shoulders; the body is then enveloped in large leaves, called *kâ·pa-*,[4] which are secured with cords or strips of cane. The father meantime employs himself in digging a grave with an adze (*wō·lo-*[5]), in the place where his hut fire usually burns; when all is prepared the little head is uncovered, and the parents gently blow upon the face

fishing, which, as they seem to indicate a Munchausen-like facility of exaggeration in the narrator we decline to repeat" (Mouat).

[1] This applies to men, for women usually place the *del·a-* on the top of the head. It is worn by neither sex until after they have attained maturity, and only for a father, mother, husband, wife, brother, sister, son, or daughter, the *ōg-* wash alone being deemed sufficient "mourning" in the case of other relatives or friends.

[2] The term *â·kà-ōg-* is therefore applied to mourners, since they are prohibited from the use of *kòi·ob-*.

[3] "If we knew no further details as to the opinions of the intellectually gifted Hottentots, formerly so greatly underrated, it would be enough that, previous to burial, they place the body of the deceased in the same position which it once occupied as an embryo in the mother's womb" (Peschel).

[4] *Vide* Appendix B, item 74.

[5] *Vide* Appendix B, item 15.

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to beat a log of this description on a stone or other hard substance a few times before it breaks up into as small pieces as are needed.

6. In each hut that is occupied there is invariably a fire, the object of which is to keep the owner warm, to drive away insects, and to cook food, while the smoke is useful in preserving the store of provisions, which are placed about two feet above it for that purpose.[1]

7. Council fires, or fires burnt on special occasions, are not among their institutions; even the household fire is not held sacred, or regarded as symbolical of family ties, and no rites are connected with it; there are no superstitious beliefs in reference to its extinction or pollution, and it is never employed literally or figuratively as a means of purification from uncleanness, blood, death, or moral guilt.

8. Fires are generally kindled by fanning the embers with a frond of the *Asplenium nidus* (*pâ·tla-*), and they are extinguished by pressing the burning logs against some such object as a tree, canoe, or stone.

9. Reference must here be made to the mis-statement which has found its way into several papers concerning the existence of so-called "oven-trees" among the Andamanese. The belief appears to have originated in the practice which prevails among them of taking advantage, during brief halts, of the natural shelter afforded by the peculiar formation of the roots of the *Pterocarpus dalbergioides*, and trees of the *Ficus* genus, so common in these islands, and which, extending like buttresses on all sides of the trunk, are, especially when roofed over with a light thatch such as these people are accustomed to make in a few minutes, capable of accommodating small parties suddenly overtaken by a storm, or needing a temporary resting-place: the traces of fires lighted by successive parties against these trees, and the hollows thus caused, having been noticed, the opinion was formed, and, without sufficient corroborative evidence, promulgated, that they were "purposely charred," and that "great pains is taken in their preservation."[2] As a matter of fact, the Andamanese no more employ oven-trees than do the gypsies in Bulgaria, alluded to by General Pitt-Rivers, F.R.S.,[3] who, using constantly the same trees, have formed a semi-cylindrical chimney, which might reasonably be regarded, by one unacquainted with their habits, as an attempt to form an oven.

10. While it is the women's business to collect the wood, the duty of maintaining the fires, whether at home or while travelling

[1] *Vide ante* "Habitations" paragraph 5.
[2] *Vide* Mouat, pp. 308–9.
[3] *Vide* Journ. Anthrop. Inst., vol. xi. pp. 273 and 290 (Appendix I).

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Report of a Survey of the Inhabitants of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands during 1948-49

[P1]

By

B. S. Guha

Director, Department of Anthropology

About the end of the year 1946, Mr H. J. Stooks, Deputy Secretary to the Ministry of Home Affairs, consulted me with regard to proposals made by Sri A. V. Thakkar of the Bharatiya Adim Jati Sevak Sangh for undertaking work for the amelioration of the conditions of the inhabitants of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands on the same lines as the Sangh has been doing among the Bhils and other tribes of Central India. The problem of the Aborigines of the Andaman Islands, however, is not the same as that of the other primitive tribes of India. These people are some of the most ancient remnants of the human race still surviving in any part of the world, who had been very little affected from contact with other people and subsist principally on fishing and hunting. The need among them is not so much the spread of education and social uplift as the arrest of the decline in population which has been most alarming. Since the establishment of the Penal Settlement at Port Blair in 1858, the condition of the "Friendly Tribes" among these inhabitants have been most distressing. Due in the beginning to armed encounters with the forces of the Government, and also as a result of ravages from diseases like tuberculosis and syphilis contracted from Indian convicts, there has been a continuous decline in the Andamanese population. From an estimated figure of about 10,000 people in 1779 the tribe has been reduced to only 70 in 1931, and at the time of our visit there were probably not more than 37 individuals still living. Whether it will be possible to save the Andamanese from the fate of the Tasmanians whose last surviving representative passed away about 1770 is extremely doubtful.

The hostile branch of the Andamanese tribes known as the Jarawa-Onge-Sentinelese group, fortunately has been spared the fate of their more "friendly" kinsmen, and as a result of implacable hostility and comparative isolation have survived to a much larger extent. In the western forest belts of Middle and South Andamans, the Little Andaman, and the North Sentinel Islands they have resisted all intrusions from outsiders and were known to have lived in these places comparatively unmolested. No accurate census of these tribes however, was ever taken, but from estimates made by people who had some knowledge of the tribes, it does not seem possible that the total strength of these people could be more than a few hundred souls altogether before the last war. What has happened since and how far these people, specially the Jarawas, have suffered from Japanese occupation cannot accurately be determined. It is known that there had been some bombing by the Japanese in the Jarawa tract, but whether any Jarawa was killed is not known. I, therefore, suggested to Mr Stooks that an anthropological survey of the Islands was essential and a probable estimate of the surviving settlements of the population made before the question of any social welfare work can be

Mr Subramanian of the Forest Department and Mr Majid's young son also accompanied us. We reached Bumila Creek on the north eastern coast of the Little Andaman at about 3 P.M. and having sighted an Andamanese hut we decided to anchor the launch there. The beach was about 2 miles from the place of anchorage. We took out a small boat and rowed to the beach and reached the hut at about 4 P.M. It was found to be abandoned but there were signs of human occupation and within a few yards a water-hole was discovered. A broken canoe, with a single out-rigger was found close to the hut (*see* Plate I, Fig. 1). Burnt coal and smouldering ashes in the centre of the hut showed that it was probably deserted by the Aborigines as soon as they had sighted us. After making a careful inspection of the place we returned to our launch and decided to anchor there for the night. Unfortunately the choppy sea and the strong current coming from the Bumila Creek tossed our small boat throughout the whole night, as a result of which all of us had an uncomfortable time.

We left southwards towards Hut Bay early in the morning and as we moved along the coast we sighted another Onge hut. This did not seem to be deserted as we saw a few people moving about. We decided to stop there and investigate. We took out a boat and moved towards the coast with such presents as we had brought from Port Blair on the advice of the Chief Commissioner. When we got near the coast, we left the boat and walked for about a furlong through coral beds finally reaching the shore. The hut was found to be circular in shape and not too large, and was occupied by 2 adult females, 1 adult male and a young boy. The adult male, *Ukla*, was the father of the young boy and husband of the younger woman. The older woman was his mother-in-law. These people appeared very friendly. We gave them presents we had brought and took photographs and made drawings of their hut. In addition, full anthropometric measurements were taken by me and blood was taken from fingers for typing by Mr Sarkar. Ukla was able to speak a few Hindi words and we gathered that he had been to Port Blair and knew Mr Bonington, formerly of the Forest Department, Andaman Islands. We found in front of the hut, hanging from a large tree the skull and mandible of a Dugong (*see* Plate I, Figs. 3 & 4). We enquired about its significance from Ukla, but unfortunately his knowledge of Hindi was not sufficient to explain it to us. We learned from him, however, that the name of the village was *Laito*. After making friendly gestures, we returned to 'Molly' and proceeded immediately towards Hut Bay. At about noon time while we were having our lunch, we suddenly saw three outrigger canoes (of single outrigger type) coming towards us, each carrying about 4 Onges. We signalled to them and they came to our launch and tied their canoes with it and came on board. The men appeared to be friendly and not afraid of us. Our greatest difficulty, however, was language, as we could not make ourselves understood as none of the crew or any other member including Mr Subramaniam of the Forest Department knew that language. There was one man who seemed to occupy a position of authority among these men, and was painted with red and yellow ochre on the forehead, arms and breast. The

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for such a fairly long period, it was decided to give up the idea of continuing our survey of the Little Andaman that year.

At the suggestion of Mr Majid it was finally decided instead to pay a visit to the surviving members of the Friendly Andamanese tribes at Neil and Havelock Islands where they had now been transferred and settled. Unfortunately, as it was March and the closing month of the financial year, I had to return to my headquarters at Banaras and leave Mr Sarkar in charge of the party to carry on further surveys in the North and Middle Andamans as far as this was found possible.

Accordingly Mr Sarkar with his party left Port Blair on 6-3-48 on the Forest Motor Launch "Lindsay" and arrived at Long Island at about 8 A.M. on the following day. Mr Sarkar was met by Mr Joseph, T. S. D. O. who brought "Loka" and his party of four Andamanese. They were studied by him. The party left Long Island on the Forest Launch "Kokhari" at about 7-30 A.M. on the following day. Mr Joseph accompanied the party, who halted at the Guitar Island where some of Loka's associates were hunting turtles with harpoons. After leaving Guitar Island, the launch passed through Homfray Strait. Mr Joseph showed the spot where the Jarawas in 1925 attacked his camp. This is near the place from where the Jarawas usually crossed from the Baratang Island to the Middle Andamans. Proceeding further westwards, Mr Sarkar and his party reached the north-east end of the Spike Island. This is another route of migration of the Jarawas from the South to North Andamans. Usually they come from the South Andaman and cross over to Bluff Island and then reach the Spike Island opposite to it. Loka gave the information that it was about this place that several Jarawas were shot sometime back and their bodies were buried in the Bluff Island. The party went along the coast of Neil Island and anchored off Foul Bay. Human footprints identified by Mr Joseph and Loka as belonging to the Jarawas were found in the sand. Following the footprints the party found the remnants of burnt ashes and cinder in a spot in the jungle. There were also vessels made of leaves for carrying water which were still wet. These were collected as specimens of Jarawa objects for the Department's collections. No traces of Jarawas themselves could however be found who must have moved into the jungles just prior to our party's visit. Our men then crossed over to Bluff Island and searched for the Jarawa skeletons, but none were found. On the 9th of March the "Kokhari" returned to Long Island, where it anchored. Loka brought his party of 21 individuals who were now settled in Neil Island. These people were carefully studied by Mr Sarkar and notes taken regarding their geneology, family structure and physical state, etc. On the 9th the Deputy Chief Commissioner, Mr S. C. Gupta with his wife arrived at Long Island. Mr Sarkar and his party accompanied him to Stewart Sound in his boat "Elsa". Unfortunately the few Andamanese who were living there happened to have gone out in their canoes for fishing and could not be contacted (*see* Plate I, Fig. 5).

They then went with Mr Gupta to the Karen village called *Webi* situated at a short distance from Stewart Sound. There were no Andamanese there,

there were no Andamanese there,
but 400 people consisting of 133 males and 130 females who migrated from Bassein in 1924. They were Karen Christians who had settled there. After returning to Long Island on the 12th, Mr Sarkar and party left in the motor boat "Return" for a short cruise along the Jarawa country. Besides Mr Joseph, there were Mr Pooviah and a few of his Burman Bush Police armed with rifles and guns. The party passed through the Homfray's Strait and anchored at the north eastern corner of the Spike Island. Loka and his party of three Andamanese accompanied them in their two canoes. They came to the shore in one of the Andamanese canoes and after entering the forest they found bundles of bamboos piled up at one corner. This was identified as a Jarawa raft. There were also three paddles made out of a palm tree. These specimens were procured for the Department. After proceeding some distance in the jungle, 19 small fire places were counted in scattered manner. A temporary hut was also noticed at a short distance. A number of objects usually used by the Andamanese tribes for household purposes was found including a sling for carrying babies. A beautiful specimen of a Jarawa Bow painted in red in geometrical designs was also found. Photographs were taken of the settlements of the Jarawa camp and objects collected for the Museum. In another place at *Yeratiajig* remnants of a Jarawa camp including pottery and bones of animals, etc., were found. The party returned to Long Island on 14-3-48 and examined 8 of the remaining members of Loka's party. It left the same day for Port Blair where it arrived at 10 P.M. On the 25th Mr Sarkar and his party with the Deputy Chief Commissioner Mr Gupta, left for Kar Nicobar where it arrived on the following day. It returned to Port Blair after staying for a few days. During this time in Kar Nicobar, besides studying the Nicobarese of the Island Mr Sarkar met two Jarawa children who were captured and brought over there and placed in a local Mission School for education.

In the following year in January 1949, another small party was sent under Dr A. K. Mitra with Messrs H. K. Bose and A. Bhattacharyya, to continue the survey of the Little Andaman further along the eastern coast. They visited *Hut Bay* on the 28th and went to the Onge settlement there. A large circular hut similar to that seen by us at Tambebui was observed. It contained nine cots with a fire place in the centre. There were also two outrigger canoes, one in front of the hut and another on the beach. Altogether 11 Onges were found consisting of 2 adult males, 6 females and 3 young children between the ages of 6 to 15. The 8 adults and the adolescent boys were carefully measured and observations noted about their special somatic characters. After leaving Hut Bay they went as far as the South Point which is the southernmost point on the eastern coast of the Little Andaman, but did not see any other Onge settlement. They had to return on the 31st as the launch could not be spared any further.

The Onges were found to be strong and healthy and free from venereal disease, a scourge, which along with tuberculosis were chiefly responsible for the rapid depopulation of the Andamanese tribes. Our observations agree with the accounts of the Negritos of the Andaman Islands published before

4: Guha E-5 (1948-1949)1953 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

namely, that they are a very dark pigmy tribe, with short round head and infantile features. The hair of the head is wholly of the distinctly "peppercorn" pattern, *i.e.*, it grows in small tufts with intervening vacant spaces between (*see* Plate VII). The women were noticed to possess steotopygia in a markedly developed form (*see* Plate II, Fig. 2).

Freiherr von Eickstedt who visited the Islands in December 1926, claimed that he was the first scientist to observe these two traits among the Andamanese. His contentions, however, cannot stand scrutiny, for in a paper read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh on February 2, 1880, entitled "Remarks on the Aborigines of the Andaman Islands" and published in the Proceedings of that Society, Surgeon E. S. Brander, who was stationed at Port Blair as Second Medical Officer, speaking about the general features of the Andamanese women, remarked that they "undergo exceptional enlargement of the gluteal region, the appearance of which is enhanced by their custom of attaching branches of twigs to their waist bands, so as to hang over this region. This large development of abdomen, hip and buttocks, added to a very waddling style of gait, gives these women in progression a most grotesque appearance". Eight years after, in a paper published in the Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography, Maurice Portman, who was the Officer-in-Charge of the Andamanese, in describing his visit to the Little Andaman, wrote about "the Hottentot Venus order of beauty" of the Onge women. The Hottentot Venus, as is well-known, is noted for her steotopygic development. These two papers appeared over 40 years before von Eickstedt's publication.

A detailed comparative review of the somatic traits of the Onges based on the measurements taken by members of this Department will be published in the next issue of the Bulletin. Mr S. S. Sarkar's analysis of the blood group data is, however, published in this issue.

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Blood Groups from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands

By

S. S. Sarkar

The following blood group data were collected during the months of February-April, 1948 in the course of a visit to Little Andaman, Long Island and Car Nicobar by a party under Dr B. S. Guha from the Department of Anthropology, of which the present writer was a member. The data grouped according to the different tribes are as follows :—

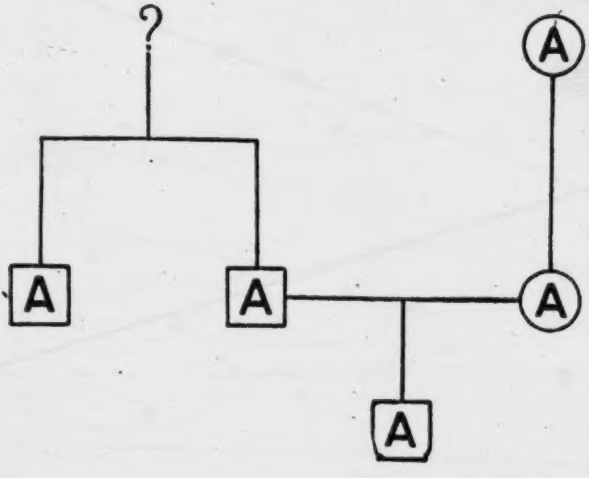
Onges

34 Onges, 19 males and 15 females, were grouped from the island of Little Andaman. They were collected from the settlements round about Bumila Creek, Dugong Creek and the village Tambebui on the N. E. part of the island. The blood group distribution is as follows :—

O	5	14·71%
A	23	67·65%
B	2	5·88%
AB	4	11·76%
	34	

The predominance of group A was already noticeable from Chaudhuri's (Gates, 1940) earlier study of 5 Onges, 3 of whom belonged to A and 1 each to Group O and B.

This will be also apparent from the following pedigree, where three generations show only A.



[p. 25]

5: Sarkar D-5 (1948) 1953 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Nicobars AZ7

A 114 143 580

Owing to linguistic difficulties it was not possible to find out the relationships in the majority of cases. It is, however, evident that inbreeding must be very high in such a small, isolated and closed population.

Jarawas

A 114 143

Gates (1940, 1948) reported blood groups of the five Jarawas captured at Bluff Island in September, 1938. Of these five, the adult woman and her eldest son died at Port Blair during Japanese occupation. It appears that Chaudhuri did not group the blood of the 4th son born at Port Blair to the above captured woman, since that would have made the total number 6 (mother +4 sons + 1 unrelated girl) instead of 5. This boy (Pl. IX, Fig. 3) is now 13 years old and was found like his mother and brothers to be belonging to Group O. The blood samples of the other three children were found to be O. The children (Pl. IX) are now living in a Car Nicobar mission.

Andamanese

A 161 A 125 143

The Andamanese population has undergone very serious depletion. The total strength was estimated to be about 37 as compared with 90 of the census figure of 1931. Only 21 of these people could be tested from the islands of Havelock and Neil. Their blood groups are :—

O	2	9·52%
A	12	57·14%
B	5	23·81%
AB	2	9·52%
	21	

Nicobarese

N 361 N 125 [164] 143

The majority of the Nicobarese were grouped at the Car Nicobar island. A group of 15 people from Chaura and a patient suffering from infantile paralysis from Nankauri were included in the sample. All the 16 of the latter group belonged to Group O.

The Nicobarese blood group distribution is as follows :—

	O	A	B	AB	p	q	r	D/σ
	117	5	14	0				
%	86·03	3·68	10·29	..	·019	·054	·928	0·5

N 164

Car Nicobar was visited towards the decline of the infantile paralysis epidemic. There were only 24 patients in the hospital. A good number, however, of those who escaped death but were otherwise invalidated were examined.

N 734 125

5: Sarkar D-5 (1948) 1953 AZ2 Andamans AZ2 Nicobars AZ7

A 114 144 143 Gates (1948) is of opinion that: "The blood groups of Negritos and Australoids must have been very different then, as they are now, the former being high in B, the latter having A without B".

Earlier Negrito data from other sources, as also the results of this investigation, do not support the above contention. Both the Australoids and the Negritos have been found to be high in A. The Negrito peoples of the A 143 144 Andaman Islands, although they are now isolated in the different islands, probably all belong to the same ethnic stock and when their blood group data are pooled together the following percentages are obtained :—

		O	A	B	AB	Total
Total . . .		13	36	7	6	62
Negritos*(Andaman Islands) . .	%	20·97	58·07	11·29	9·67	

A [162] The total number of 62 consists of 34 Onges from Little Andaman, 22 Andamanese, 6 Jarawas. When the 22 Andamanese, who are definitely known to be mixed, are exempted from the above total, the position is as follows :—

	O	A	B	AB	Total
	11	23	2	4	40
%	27·50	57·50	5·00	10·00	

It thus appears that more than half the Negrito population belong to group A and their similarity with the Australians in this respect, associated with the enormous differences in physical features between the two, still remains to be satisfactorily explained.

Nicobarese Blood Groups

N 144 143 [174] The Nicobarese blood groups present a picture so far unknown to S.-E. Asia. The high frequency of O is characteristic of the American Indians. The Nicobarese are believed to have migrated into their present habitat from Lower Burma. Little is known of blood group distribution from Burma. Mollison and Reddy (1946) have published a set of data from 229 peoples, comprising 155 pure Burmans, 57 Karens, 13 Chins and 4 Kachins. They show the following blood group distribution :—

O	A	B	AB
36·2	26·2	29·7	7·9

* Chaudhuri's sample of 5 Onges (Gates, 1940) could not be combined with the present author's sample lest the same person is included in both the data. There are chances of such duplication in small populations as such.

5: Sarkar D-5 (1948)1953 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Nicobars AZ7
Maori 074

The Nicobarese values thus differ widely from the above. It will not be out of place here to mention of Eickstedt's samples from Upper Burma (Steffan, 1932) which gives 60% of O and 40% of B and stands somewhat closer to the Nicobarese data than the above figures of Mollison and Reddy.

In spite of the close cultural affinities of the Nicobarese with those of Malaya and Indo-China, in respect of their aversion to milk, the outrigger canoe, artificial deformation of head, the Malayan form of sniffing cheeks (Malay kiss), etc., the Nicobarese have so far remained ignorant of agriculture. It appears, therefore, that the Nicobarese migrated from a habitat where agriculture was unknown and it is among such peoples that their close congeners could be found.

Negritos, Australians and Polynesians

The above three ethnic stocks, though widely varying in physical features have in common the high element of blood group A. It remains to be seen how they stand in respect of the sub-groups of A and the MN factors. So far only the Australians have been subjected to the study of MN factors (Birdsell and Boyd, 1940).

The similarity of the above three peoples in respect of the blood groups was pointed out to some extent by Howells (1934) and as such Gates' statement (p. 28) is probably unjustified. The percentages of B come to 14·1 in the case of Negritos of the Philippines (Grove, 1926), to 5·00 in the case of those from the Andaman Islands and to 2·2 in the case of the Hawaiians* (Nigg, 1930). Samoa with its fairly large content of B of 19·4% (Shapiro, 1940) is already a problem. The paucity of B among the Australians is already well-known. All these appear to show that B is a later instrusion in this area and A was predominant among the Negritos and the Australoids as it is now. The Polynesian movements began towards the dawn of Christian era from Indonesia when B did not probably reach there. This might have influenced the Nicobarese as well and the 3·68% of A may be Polynesian in origin.

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* Time is ripe enough for discarding Phillips Maori data by now (see Shapiro, Howells, Graydon and Simmons, and Godley). They are compared with the recent data below:—

O	A	B	AB	
47·5%	39·5%	1·0%	12·0%	(Phillips, 1931 n=200)
41·2%	58·1%	0·7%	0	(Graydon & Simmons, 1945; n=267)
45·26%	48·74%	4·07%	1·91%	(Godley, 1946-47; n=835)
44·27%	52·96%	1·57%	1·20%	(Paddock, 1946; n=1335)

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

Hygiene and Medical Practices among the Onge (Little Andaman)

By Lidio Cipriani

Contents:

Preliminary Note
I. Hygienic Conditions
1. Habitation
2. Clothing and personal care
3. Food
II. Effects on the People's Lives
III. Illnesses and Onge Curative Methods

Preliminary Note

I went to Little Andaman several times, from 1951 onwards, for the sole purpose of studying the Onge. At that time the interior of the island was completely unknown and it was considered dangerous to violate it owing to the hostility of some groups of natives. Some friendly Onge themselves tried to dissuade me from leaving my coastal camp to explore their thick jungle. It was only in 1952 that I succeeded in what proved to be a difficult trip through virgin forest from the east to the west coast of Little Andaman, across its maximum breadth. The enthusiasm of the people accompanying me (fifteen altogether, including some faithful Oraons from the Indian district of Bihar, Burmese policemen and some Onge) enabled us to advance with a speed beyond our hopes. Forest difficulties prevented us from carrying heavy loads. Only the Oraons had some small baggage, which they hung in such a way as to leave both hands free to carve their way through the jungle with a *dah* (long Malayan knife), when necessary. No camping material could be brought, not even beds or tents, beyond the essentials for scientific work and for cooking, which were kept in specially prepared small, water-proof metallic containers. We camped in the forest and marked every camp with the incision of letters, 20 cms high and 5 cms deep, in the bark of gigantic trees, far from the ground, so as to have all the itinerary well indicated. An Oraon who was entrusted with this particular job wrote the meaningful sigla "Anthropos", sometimes also my name, as at Nachugé on the west coast, as well as the date. I did this to facilitate further investigations. All my itineraries in Little Andaman, from 1952 onwards, are marked like this and may be easily found again by the Onge or by my Oraons. Hunting, fishing, collecting wild fruits, edible roots and honey supplied us with food; no vegetarian can live in such a country because, very often, only pork is available there. Of that we had plenty every day, sometimes with nothing else. My men were eager to run and find an acceptable halting place as soon as possible, just to receive cartridges for hunting with me before dark; but we also had

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

torches for hunting by night. There were pigs everywhere. In half an hour we often got six or more of them. At Chemalé, far from the coast, we had eleven in a few minutes for distribution to everybody, including roaming Onge. Pigeons and ducks also were often plentiful. The simple pleasures of hunting incited everyone to a spontaneous daily struggle through the dense forest; and so, every month, I managed to carry out many times the work I could have done had I not kept all the men glad to follow me. On seven different occasions I spent 162 days in Little Andaman, out of a total of 634 days altogether in the Andamanese Archipelago – all of them given up to Onge research. These trips are recorded in Port Blair Government offices. A few details on the subject are published in the "Bulletin of the Department of Anthropology", Government of India, starting in Vol. II, No. 1, 1953 (issued in 1956) and extended to other issues. Such papers were hurriedly prepared by me while I was halting in Calcutta on my way from the Andamans to Europe. Press proofs could never be submitted to me; there are, consequently, many misprints, particularly in the figures relating to my Onge Census. The misprints are so obvious that they could only influence a most biased critic: to be discussed in future papers and while my Onge book is in preparation. In Port Blair (South Andaman) I started an Onge Museum with material collected by me. I had the honour of inaugurating it on 6 July, 1953 in the presence of the Chief Commissioner for Andamans and Nicobars, Mr. A. K. Ghosh, one of the kindest and most intelligent Indian gentlemen that it was my pleasure to meet in Asia. On 9 March, 1954 Dr. RAJENDRA PRASAD, President of the Republic of India, also visited the Museum. On that occasion I introduced to him 30 of my Onge friends (wives, husbands and children) in their most natural attire. The President questioned me at length on Onge anthropology and ethnology with the pertinence of a specialist.

While in Little Andaman I tried to study all possible aspects of Onge life. I also tried to count the natives: a very difficult task for they are a nomadic people, ready to vanish into the jungle at any moment. Often I was surrounded by them without seeing a single one. In the darkness of their jungle, the small, black, naked Onge easily disappear. They see us but we do not see them. They can only be counted in their sleeping quarters in communal huts; even so, results are misleading. I found a number of communal huts in the interior regions of Little Andaman, whereas previously they were said to exist only on the coast. The larger, more solidly built huts are in the forest. With the help of my Indian assistants I obtained plans and photographs of all the huts that I saw. Unfortunately the number of Onge communal huts is rapidly diminishing – a very significant fact. Many are in ruins, many more completely destroyed. Only kitchen-middens and occasional clusters of planted bamboo indicate their former location. Through an interpreter, and with two Onge speaking a little Hindi, I was able to gather information on these and other matters. Direct observation, however, proved the best way of gaining knowledge. In some places there was nothing to help me, and I was compelled to guess about communal huts whose inmates chose to hide in the jungle. Of the many personal names that I collected I must say that they are reliable only for a short period: the Onge like to change their names from time to time. All this, in addition to the Onge's nomadic way of life, causes great confusion and makes a proper Census almost impossible. Frequent changing of names also hinders the establishment of genealogies. Furthermore, the Onge custom of adopting children shifts many of them from one family to another, and adoptive parents invariably claim them as their own offspring. The parents themselves, who are ignorant of numbers, not infrequently forget how many children they have, who these children are and where they are located. It was almost useless to follow previous information concerning communal huts; and so I decided to consider mainly the situation existing at the time of my visits. The result of my Census may be imperfect, but before criticizing it it would be advisable to know the conditions that prevail in anthropological work among the Onge. Something more than merely counting people, anyhow, was achieved by me in Little Andaman.

In this short paper I am pleased to present a peculiar aspect of Onge life, an aspect that these innocent and once hostile people did not attempt to hide from me, though they also told me nothing about it. Only direct observation could help, and it involved pro-

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

3. Food

In the absence of men, women also are good at fishing inside the coral reefs. They do this with two small nets used together. Their catch generally consists of brilliantly coloured fish with yellow, red, green, blue, black and white stripes forming varied and attractive designs. The Onge eat all fish without discrimination. My Indian collaborators, on the other hand, considered the coloured fish dangerous to their health and refused to cook them ; the Sacred Vedas, in fact, advise the avoidance of brigthly hued fish and of fish without scales. I wanted to try both kinds, and found them perfectly palatable, tasty and harmless.

No tool, used for any purpose by the Onge, ever gets a cleaning. Cleanliness, I repeat, is unknown in Little Andaman. See how food is prepared and disposed of ! Care is taken only not to throw big pieces of meat intended for cooking directly on the bare ground ; but once it is cooked, food is treated with the utmost disregard for dirt, dust, cobwebs and other such things. It is usually left lying around on large leaves spread out for the purpose. The remains of the Onge's orgiastic meals are kept out of reach of the dogs on the ceiling of the huts, to be covered with flies when no fire is lit directly below. Sand and grit may get wedged annoyingly in the teeth, but not such impalpable things as dust or cobwebs. The use of unclean food is not repugnant to the Onge. The same can be said for water polluted by dogs drinking and bathing in it, or by the presence of putrefying carcases. In the west of Little Andaman I saw some Onge avidly drinking from pools of a blackish water with a revolting sulphurous smell. After thoroughly filtering and boiling it, I too used such water, for it was the only water available in the neighborhood. This caused no ill effects. My Indian men considered it perfectly healthy and invigorating, and drank it safely in its natural condition.

The Onge eat with their unwashed fingers, without the help of tools. On rare occasions they use platters made of the flattened-out stems – or bracts – of *areca* palms. They sometimes carry these platters when travelling, but of course never wash them although they become coated in rancid, greasy filth. They soon assume a dark colour and a truly revolting appearance – aside from the awful smell. A. R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN's statement – that the Andamanese paint their bodies to neutralize the unpleasant smell of food that clings to them after their orgiastic feedings – shows only indirect knowledge of the life and manners of those people. Even the horrible flatulence that follows their pork orgies is not considered an inconvenience ; yet it is much more revolting than all the other body odours.

Although the Onge observe few hygienic precautions they do follow a number of medical practices, not all devoid of beneficial effects. Here are a few more remarks on their eating and drinking habits. For about six months of the year, between November and April, water is scarce in Little Andaman. Every kind of fresh water is then considered good by the Onge, regardless of whether it is a murky infusion of rotting leaves or afloat with the putrefied

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

and therefore dangerous to offend by cooking them. Luckily they accepted fish of almost every description, and vegetables. To convince them of our good intentions concerning their food, at Port Blair an Onge observer was stationed permanently near the kitchen to watch the preparation of meals. Nevertheless, within a few days all 30 Onge fell ill as a consequence of the different food and climate. In their island they sleep, completely naked and uncovered, lying directly on beds made of rough branches. Their only precaution, as I mentioned before, is to keep a fire permanently burning close to the bed. This was not feasible in the rooms with wooden floors that were provided for them in Port Blair, and blankets did not avail. So the 30 Onge developed a fever and we were obliged to take them urgently back to Little Andaman, where they promptly recovered. The incident gave me a further opportunity to observe the curative methods of the Onge.

With regard to their care to avoid illness from food, I must point out the fact that misleading information has been published on the subject even in reputed papers on the Andamans. I will discuss them in my Onge book, but I wish here to briefly stress a few points: the Onge, and the present residual coastal or forest Andamanese, refuse to eat – besides birds and fish such as shark, ray, eel or muraenae – some other animals such as paradoxurus, bats, rats, varanus and snakes. The contrary is affirmed in those papers. To quote the well-known book by A. R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN ("The Andaman Islanders", pp. 37, 91 and 389), all Andaman Islanders, including the Onge, consider the above-mentioned species edible. Varanus is supposed to be acceptable for its lustful habits that make of it an aphrodisiac. My direct and protracted experience both in Little and in Great Andaman compels me to state that such information is false. It is true, however, that the Andaman Islanders believe they acquire some of the properties of their devoured victims. This occurs only if the animals are cut up alive. Therefore turtles, pigs and dugongs are cruelly sectioned while still alive, and the Onge also believe that their health and energy profit by it. Cannibalism may be founded on such beliefs, but it is completely unknown to Andaman Islanders of all times and places. Young sucking-pigs are avoided, as food, by men, and even withheld from the dogs; but the Onge are partial to other things which, in our opinion, are far worse: crickets, and the fat larvae of coleoptera that collect in tree trunks.

Without giving here a full list of the foods that are considered harmful or curative, I shall add just a few remarks on the subject. The healthiest, as well as the tastiest part of the pig is supposed to be the kidney and its surrounding fat. It is offered to old or distinguished people, as a sign of favour. As I helped the Onge, as much as possible, with gifts of tools and medicines, they found it complimentary to name me after their favorite titbit, intending thereby to honour me as a friend and healer. By such a name I came to be known in Little Andaman, and this made my work easier. In the Onge language the word for kidney fat is *cue-changhēghē*; I was delighted with it, for it proclaimed the high esteem I was held in by my Onge friends.

Foods considered healthy by the Onge include honey, yams, several succulent roots and the fat of turtle and dugong. Pteropus, a giant bat very

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

common in the Andamans, said by RADCLIFFE-BROWN (p. 273) to be eaten by the Andaman Islanders as a protection against rheumatism, is never killed. For some superstitious reason the Onge are simply horrified at the thought of touching such an enormous flying bat. Among the fruits, those of a plant whose wood has such a revolting smell that it is known, in English, as "stool-tree", are believed to have exceptional protective properties for the human body. The fruits themselves smell even worse than the wood, but this, to the Onge, makes them appetizing rather than disgusting. Concerning honey, and the many sugary fruits of the jungle that are available all the year round, the Onge luckily ignore the simple method of distilling alcohol. No intoxicating drink reaches Little Andaman from the outer world, whereas in Great Andaman alcohol, together with imported syphilis, was one of the main causes of depopulation. No syphilis appears as yet to have reached Little Andaman. This is also confirmed by the research carried out by Dr. HERMANN LEHMANN of London's St. Bartholomew's Hospital, during February 1953 in my Onge camp in Labanare (north-east coast of Little Andaman).

II. Effects on the People's Lives

The islanders die young, specially the men. The majority of them succumb before reaching the age of 20; most of the survivors die between 20 and 40; the rest – with a very few exceptions – before 50. Women, after marriage, follow a similar pattern: the death rate among women, however, is slightly different owing to a less corrosive sexual life. Some women may live to the age of sixty, but both sexes age soon, appearing older than their years when still in their twenties. The short Onge span of life recalls conditions which apparently prevailed among prehistoric and protohistoric men. Palaeolithic man died at an earlier age than modern man. The Onge today, in many respects, behaves as palaeolithic man behaved countless centuries ago. – Infant mortality is high; the first five days of life are the most critical for the Onge, owing, in part, to the hard life led by mothers even during pregnancy, which often causes functional damage to the placenta. Delivery is generally easy and traumatic injury rarely occurs; but premature births are common, and so are malformations and other anomalies. Imperfect infants are quickly eliminated by their parents. As a result, only a small number of children are allowed to grow up, but these appear normal. There are no blind and no deaf-and-dumb people in Little Andaman. I saw only two instances of incipient lameness: in an unmarried boy of about twenty and in a young married woman. Only robust infants can survive.

The Onge, so careful about their food, are completely indifferent to something else that is considered very harmful in continental and insular regions close to the Andamans. There, menstruating women are often segregated and considered harmful to the entire community. Not so in Little Andaman, where the remedies applied in the circumstance are extremely primitive (cf. supra) and could probably be traced to palaeolithic man. I saw nothing

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

immense quantities of it together with pork. I was with them three times when this recurred, so I could observe their behaviour exhaustively. With their bellies full, the natives rest. Their only activity is body painting, performed by the women on the skin of their peacefully sleeping husbands. Designs change from time to time as I said before, according to the women's inventiveness. Each family challenges the others in renewing their patterns. The best are later reproduced until the next change. From year to year I noticed no real evolution in this rudimentary art, but a cyclical fashion, with temporary preference, in males and females alike, for some geometrical designs, unconnected with whatever kind of food they had been eating. This contradicts the published affirmations of several authors, who allege that the Andamanese paint special patterns in special colours for different kinds of food. There is nothing more false, at least with reference to the Onge. Merry feasting, whether on pork turtle, dugong, fish or honey, leads to a period of rest and body decoration – always in similar patterns and colours – with the unique purpose of preventing illness. We might say that painting the body is equal to cleaning it, but this is quite unintentional. A curious exception to the Onge's filthy habits is the practice of sweeping the floor after solemn banquets in communal huts. The surface of the floor consists of unpacked earth hardened by casual tramping. When it is dry, sweeping raises a heavy dust that fills the hut to the ceiling. It deposits there on the wooden beams where the Onge like to store cooked victuals. So they eat their food, as I said before, coated with dust, no matter how thick. A brush without a handle is used to sweep the floor ; it is 80 cms long and no thicker than a man's wrist. It is one of the nicest tools made by the Onge, and consists of strong, hard, elastic palm fibres bound together with strips of rattan. The dirt is simply thrown out all around the hut, by pushing it under the roof mats that never reach the ground.

These notes offer a first glimpse into a peculiar aspect of Onge life. It is to be deplored that these vanishing people have not yet been exhaustively studied, notwithstanding their anthropological interest and high biological significance.

7:Sarkar D-4, 5 (1948) 1960 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

Onge Population and Settlements. — **Introduction.** — Since the opening of the Andaman sub-station of the Department of Anthropology, Government of India, the Little Andaman Island has been visited several times by anthropological experts but the sum-total of knowledge has been rather meagre. We have not yet been able to know accurately the total Onge population. The recent paper by CIPRIANI [1] (1956), on the other hand, gives a hitherto unknown picture of the biology of the Onge population. The latter appears to show, as will be obvious from the data presented below, a high masculinity while CIPRIANI's method of population census shows high feminine population.

Earlier Data. — In a discussion of this nature we can leave aside the Onge population *estimated* at the decennial Censuses and take into account those actually seen and counted. In 1911 the number of Onges actually seen comprised :

adult male	118,	adult female	78
child male	62,	child female	28
	180		106

thus giving a total of 286 individuals. This shows a 10.20 % excess of males in the case of adults and an excess of 18.89 % males in the case of children.

During the Census of 1921, a total number of 99 individuals was counted at the following places :

	Rutland Island	Tochiewe	Toibalawe	Terasdda [2]	Total
Adult male	27	6	6	5	44
Adult female	18	–	5	3	26
Child male	8	1	3	5	17
Child female	8	–	2	2	12
	61	7	16	15	99

Eighty Onges were counted in 1911 on Rutland Island, which number decreased by about 24 % to 61 in 1921. No Onges were reported from the same island during the Census of 1931 and at present there appears to be none, either. The details of the 80 Onges reported in 1911 are unknown.

The Rutland population of 1921, however, shows an excess of 10 % adult males while the child population shows the two sexes in equal numbers. The total population, actually seen in 1921, shows an excess of 12.86 % adult males while it is 8.62 % in the case of children. Compared with the 1911 population it appears that the adult male excess has increased by 2.66 % in 1921 while the child population shows a favourable decrease by 10.37 %.

Recent Data. — On February 25, 1948 during the first trip of the Department of Anthropology [3], 38 individuals were counted before the communal hut of Tambebui, which comprised 17 adult males, 15 adult females and 6 children, 4 males and 2 females. The higher number of males among both the adults and children is apparent in this small sample. The above 38 individuals comprised 4 persons, 2 males and 2 females, from the communal hut of Laito, which had been visited by the above party the day before. The total population of the communal hut of Tambebui is probably 34, which is in striking contrast to the population of 4 souls for the communal hut of Laito.

GUHA also mentions the January, 1949 trip by the Department of Anthropology into Hut Bay, towards the south of the island, where 11 individuals, comprising 2 adult males, 6 adult females and 3 children (sex not mentioned) were seen in the local communal hut. The latter contained 9 sleeping places only.

The 1952 and 1953 parties of the Department of Anthropology were led by LIDIO CIPRIANI. His account is difficult to follow. There are very few relevant data regarding

[1] LIDIO CIPRIANI, Report on a Survey of the Little Andaman during 1951-52. Bull. Dept. Anth. 2. 1956, pp. 61-82.
[2] So spelt in the 1921 Census.
[3] B. S. GUHA, Report of a Survey of the Inhabitants of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands during 1948-49, I. Calcutta 1952, pp. 1-7.

7: Sarkar D-4, 5. (1948) 1960 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

the actual Onge population. He has estimated the population instead of giving a simple population figure for each of the Onge settlements he visited. His estimates are based on the number of sleeping places in a hut, though nothing definite could be found either with regard to the total number of communal huts or the sleeping places. Then, to find out the sex of the individuals from the sleeping places seems preposterous. CIPRIANI (1956) estimates the total Onge population to be 607, comprising "229 adult men, 241 adult women and 137 children". He was able to determine the sex of the children in about 80 % of the cases, since immediately after the above quotation, he states: "Of the latter 48 are boys, 62 girls, and of 27 sex could not be ascertained". In the same paper and just two sentences before, where he gave the above figures, he mentioned a total of 497 individuals, comprising 242 men and 255 women. If the latter figures are meant only for adults then with the addition of 137 children to the above adult population of 497, the total Onge population appears to be 634. Even then the discrepancies in the adult population remain to be explained; it adds up to 470 (229 males, 241 females) once and to 497 (242 males, 255 females) another time.

The only thing that has some value in the demography of the Onges is that he has collected personal names of 107 adult males and 105 adult females. It is not known why the children have been excluded. At any rate, the personal names indicate a slightly higher number of males (50.5 %) than females while the total estimate for adults shows a hitherto unknown Onge sex ratio. With an adult population of 229 males and 241 females, the sex ratio works up to 48.7 % males and 51.3 % females.

Population estimates are always hazardous and, from all reports, the Onges appear to be a dwindling population. R. F. LOWIS, the Census Superintendent for the Andamans during 1911 and 1921 was frank enough to admit in 1921 that his 1911 estimate was "too high", though he gave one for 1921.

It is surprising that neither the Andaman Government nor the Department of Anthropology provided CIPRIANI with an assistant, trained among aboriginal people, who could have been of much help to him. At least the Onges could have been counted in each of the localities visited.

Settlements. — The typical Onge settlement is the communal hut, which is usually located on the beach. CIPRIANI mentions the communal huts in the interior of the island, but does not describe their details.

During the 1911 and 1921 Censuses coastal trips round the island were made and the former Census provides a very good map with the names of twenty settlements scattered on the island. The names are: 1) *Tambeibui*[4], 2) Uede, 3) *Nachuge*, 4) Tochiewe, 5) Tochengedu, 6) Quoname, 7) *Geejege*, 8) *Ingoi-tijala*, 9) *Endea-geleda*, 10) To-to-bwe (unoccupied), 11) *Titugalante*, 12) *Toibalawe*, 13) Tordeada (unoccupied), 14) *Kwante-tu-huage*, 15) Koreale, 16) Porale, 17) *Chetamale*, 18) *Titaiye*, 19) Ogechai, 20) Obate.

The names of the settlements visited during the 1921 Census are given at the beginning of this paper. It was also mentioned that 14 huts were seen in comparison to 19 (this will probably be 20) in 1911. The names of 15 settlements could be gathered from the Census Report of 1931 and the 10 settlements italicized above can be rather easily correlated with those of 1911.

CIPRIANI's map is again difficult to follow. Firstly, he has not given any idea of the medium of language by which he communicated with the Onges. He has located in his map 18 existing coastal huts, of which the name of one between Otirubara and Benyaboi is missing. The position of the "supposed" huts within the jungle is misleading. Was he equipped with surveying instruments? Then he mentions 11 huts which are "no more in existence". How were they recognized? In what earlier context have they been identified as such? Only five of the eleven names (Obate, Palalankwe [or Kwalalanque, according to CIPRIANI], Ogechai, Ingoi-tijala and Chetamale) could be correlated with earlier records. Of the 20 coastal huts listed by him four (Nachuge, Geejege [or Gaje, according to CIPRIANI], Titaje and Tambeibui) could be correlated with the names of the 1931 Census map.

[4] So spelt in the 1911 Census.

7:Sarkar D-4, 5 (1948) 1960 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
.Onge

and seven with those of the 1911 Census. The total number of twenty existing huts, however, agree in both CIPRIANI's map and the 1911 Census map; only names differ. It would have added greatly to our knowledge had CIPRIANI based his investigations on the 1911 Census map and commented on each of the place names given therein. He also mentions two huts in ruins besides eleven "no more in existence". There is no mention of any newly built hut. All this proves the decadent condition of the Onges. The coastal huts are probably more numerous than those within the jungles and their total number appears to be constant both in 1911 and in 1953.

The Onges have, in recent years, been visited so many times by anthropologists that a well-directed effort could have brought the whole population into a few genealogies — an elementary task in anthropology.

Postscript. — CIPRIANI has now (1959) published[8] the Census figures of the different communal huts. Instead of clarifying the earlier anomalies stated above, his recent population figures have raised further complications, as will be discussed below.

CIPRIANI now (1959) mentions in a footnote on p. 89 of his paper that 125 individuals, comprising 48 adult males, 44 adult females, 22 boys and 11 girls, *have beds in different communal huts*. He gives a total population figure of 394 (130 adult males, 129 adult females, 65 boys and 70 girls) obtained by actual Census from 21 communal huts. To this total figure of 394 he adds another total of 175 individuals (adult males and females 74 each, and 27 children, the latter shown as "males" on p. 90 but as "siblings" on p. 76) estimated for another 7 communal huts. Thus according to a Census of 21 huts and an estimate of 7 others, CIPRIANI now finds a total Onge population of 596, in comparison to his earlier variable figures stated above. There is no attempt to explain the discrepancies in the population figures. It is also unknown why the population of the 7 huts could not be censused, although all of them were visited between March 22 and April 4, 1953.

It is now apparent that his method of Census of the Onges is untenable since about 31.7 % (125 out of 394) of the population have beds in different communal huts. This is in harmony with the roving nature of the Onges, but it shows that only about one third of the population is migratory and about two thirds sedentary. This is probably not true for the Onges. At least, the fixed nature of beds in the communal huts loses its significance and is probably an uncertain criterion for an Onge Census.

As to a recalculation of the Census figures for each of the 21 huts, it is seen that the total population appears to be 382 (129 adult males, 126 adult females, 64 boys and 63 girls) instead of 394 given by CIPRIANI. This definitely shows high masculinity not only among adults but also among the children. With an adult population of 129 males and 126 females the sex ratio works up to 50.6 % males and 49.4 % females, the excess of 1.2 % being statistically significant.

In the present publication CIPRIANI has published personal names of 133 adult males and 140 female adults, but the Onge habit of frequently changing names, mentioned by him on p. 70, has not been substantiated. Since the same issue of the journal contains an anthropometric study of the Onges, in which names of the individuals measured were noted, it would have been worth while testing how far the Onges practise the above custom. As will be obvious from the foregoing as well as from this P. S., CIPRIANI has not started with the known to unravel the unknown.

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[8] L. CIPRIANI, A Survey of Little Andaman during 1954. Bull. Dept. of Anthr. 3. 1959, pp. 66-96.

sedentary existence based on primitive agriculture, and abandonment of a nomad life as gatherers of wild sago and other forest products ... Although agriculture is now important, there is no doubt that the Sulungs are at heart food-gatherers and hunters, who infinitely prefer a nomadic life in the forest to the more sedentary way of life they are now taking to .... There is a good case for assuming the Sulungs to have been entirely sago-gatherers when they first came under outside domination: borne out by their own traditions that they learnt cereal cultivation from the Daflas, by the identity of technique with that tribe, and above all by their being at the present day at a stage transitional between the practice of fixed cultivation and that of food-gathering".

STONOR thought that the Sulung "are probably the only people of Mongolian stock on the Asiatic mainland who still maintain an economy based largely on food-gathering and hunting", and that "they may well be the most primitive of Mongolian tribes surviving anywhere". This is, of course, an error. Apart from the Raji of Kumaon, who are in a transitional stage to a certain extent comparable to that of the Sulung, we know the mongoloid Phi Tong Luang or Yumbri of northern Siam, who are still pure primitive food-gatherers and hunters. It is precisely their wide distribution which gives these small scattered tribes particular importance, since it sheds some light on the racial history of southern Asia and on the early cultural stages of the great mongoloid race.

STONOR estimates the number of Sulung at perhaps six or seven thousand.

CHRISTOPH VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF, *Culture Types in Assam Himalayas*, Indian Geographical Journal, Vol. XXI, No. 2, 1946.

C. R. STONOR, *The Sulung Tribe of the Assam Himalayas*, Anthropos, Vol. XLVII, 1952, pp. 947—962.

Andaman Islands

The ten tribes of the Great Andaman group are practically extinct as a result of their contact with civilization. At the time of Dr. B. S. GUHA's visit, in 1948, only 31 persons survived. We are fortunate in having two outstanding monographs on these tribes, EDWARD HORACE MAN's *On the Aboriginal Inhabitants of the Andaman Islands*, first published in the "Journal of the Anthropological Institute" in 1882, and later as a book, and A. R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN's *The Andaman Islanders*, Cambridge, 1922 (2nd edition 1933). Yet, it should not be forgotten that MAN, although an excellent and conscientious observer, was not a trained anthropologist, and that at the time RADCLIFFE-BROWN was in the Andamans, 1906 to 1908, the native population had shrunk to a fraction of its original size,

while its culture was already in the process of disintegration. Moreover, MAN dealt almost exclusively with the South Andaman tribes, mainly with the Aka-Bea, while RADCLIFFE-BROWN's researches were centered mainly on some of the northernmost tribes. As a result, not all the tribes were given equal attention. This is regrettable since their religious concepts and myths were by no means uniform. Therefore one cannot say that our information about the ten Great Andaman tribes is as full and up to modern standards as would be desirable. There is, of course, no more hope of ever filling the existing gaps in our knowledge. It is the more necessary that the still relatively intact groups of Andamanese be thoroughly studied before it is too late.

Ongi (Onge)

The Ongi of Little Andaman owe their survival to their isolation and to the fact that they remained hostile until the end of the 1880's and even thirty years ago were not yet considered as quite reliable. Nevertheless, their numbers are constantly decreasing as the following estimates in the various Census Reports seem to indicate

1901 . . . 672
1911 . . . 631
1921 . . . 346
1931 . . . 250

Of course, these figures, being mere estimates, are not reliable, and the last two are too low. As Professor LIDIO CIPRIANI of Florence, who spent many months with the Ongi in 1952, 1953, and 1954, kindly informed us, he came to different results. In his letter, dated May 2nd, 1958, he writes:

" I visited all communal huts with aim of taking a census of the Ongi. Every family has a bed in a communal hut, i. e. a kind of 'ritual' bed on which they marry and under which they are buried when they die. I prepared a list of persons using each bed. This added up to about 500 Ongi, but I saw less than 200 of them. The majority is still very shy and, when approached, ready to disappear into the jungle. The names of the absent persons were given to me by other Ongi. I left this list of personal names with the Department of Anthropology, Indian Museum, Calcutta, but kept a copy".

This would seem to indicate that the situation is not quite as bad as appears from the Census Reports. But even so, it is very serious and is constantly deteriorating. The Census Report of 1931 says that "the numbers decrease year by year mainly from infection such as influenza introduced at times of contact with civilization. Some septs have almost completely disappeared during the last years".

In a recent paper Dr. N. DATTA-MAJUMDER, Director, Department of Anthropology, Government of India, writes:

"From a study of 34 Onge families contacted by us, it is found that the average size of the family is only 3.15. Thirteen families out of 34 are childless. That is, 38.2% of the married couples are sterile".

When, in 1946, proposals were made for undertaking work for the amelioration of the conditions of the inhabitants of the Andaman Islands along the same line as had been done among the Bhil and other tribes of Central India, Dr. B. S. GUHA, at that time Director of the Department of Anthropology, very reasonably observed that "the problem of the aborigines of the Andaman Islands is not the same as that of the other primitive tribes of India", and that "the need among them is not so much the spread of education and social uplift as the arrest in the decline in population which has been most alarming".

The Ongi have been in sporadic contact with the outside world for many years. They have been visiting Port Blair, particularly since some of them moved to Rutland Island on the southern tip of Great Andaman. This contact with civilization was bound to affect their material culture, as well as their whole mentality. We may again quote Dr. DATTA-MAJUMDER who says:

"As a result of this long contact the Onge have already come to appreciate a number of foreign articles, for example, tobacco leaves, tea leaves, sugar, matches, aluminium utensils and implements made of iron (especially bill-hooks and files). In order to secure these articles, they often barter away their valuable honey and shells. The afore-mentioned changes in material culture have at present touched only the fringe of Onge culture. But the demand for these articles (especially tobacco leaves and safety matches) is becoming so great that Onge culture is likely to be vitally affected in the near future".

Dr. DATTA-MAJUMDER came to the conclusion that "the hunting and food-gathering Onge culture, which had been an autonomous cultural system in the past, is now breaking down".

The Ongi were repeatedly visited by government officers, but the resulting information is paltry. PORTMAN spent several months among the coastal groups of Little Andaman in 1886 and 1887 and collected a few hundred words of their language. In 1901, C. BODEN KLOSS visited a group of Ongi on Rutland Island and one on Little Andaman, both only for a few hours. At some time between 1906 and 1908, A. R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN went to Little Andaman for several weeks and made a preliminary study of the Ongi language. In 1928, EGON VON EICKSTEDT spent a few weeks among the Ongi on Rutland Island and visited briefly several groups on the coast of Little Andaman for the sake of physical anthropological research.

114 Brief reconnaissance tours among the Ongi were made by Indian anthropologists in 1948 (Dr. B. S. GUHA and assistants), 1949 (Dr. A. K. MITRA and assistants) and 1955 (Dr. N. DATTA-MAJUMDER). Professor LIDIO CIPRIANI is the only scholar who engaged in prolonged research among the Ongi of Little Andaman, and this not only on the coast, but also in the interior of the island. In March, 1952, he crossed the island from the East to the West Coast. He was again among the Ongi from February to May, 1953, and from February to May, 1954. A brief report on his 1952 and 1953 expeditions was published in the Bulletin of the Department of Anthropology, Calcutta. He is planning to publish his results in a book. In 1953 and 1954, he was accompanied by a young Bengali, Mr. PRONAB GANGULI, who collected about 400 Ongi words.

[124] When all of Professor CIPRIANI's results are published we shall, no doubt, be well informed about the Ongi's physical anthropology, their material culture and such aspects of their customs as can be observed without a knowledge of their language and without an adequate interpreter. However, as he himself remarks in the letter mentioned above, "the barrier of language makes it difficult to analyze many Ongi facts". Therefore we cannot expect a deeper insight into the Ongi's social organization, religion, myths and customs.

[161] To sum up: We are confronted here with a group that is in
[182] danger of disappearing in the not very distant future. It may survive for several decades in ever diminishing numbers, but its extermination may at any time be accelerated by epidemics. Moreover, its culture is already beginning to undergo substantial changes and may disintegrate very fast. If ever there was a case for urgent research, it is that of the Ongi. When, in the Census Report of 1931, BONINGTON observed with regard to them that here "a vast field of research awaits the anthropologist of the future", the Director General of the Census, J. H. HUTTON, significantly added in a footnote: "Provided, that is, that the Onge survives long enough".

The task is not only urgent, but unusually promising. An ambitious and well trained anthropologist who decides to spend the necessary time among the Ongi of Little Andaman will find an almost virgin field of research and one of the most archaic cultures still extant, a culture which, though already threatened. is at present still essentially intact. He can be sure that his researches, if properly done, will yield results of the first importance which, when published, may rank with EDWARD HORACE MAN's and RADCLIFFE-BROWN's classic works on the great Andaman tribes.

[124] Dr. CIPRIANI's experiences show that a prolonged sojourn on Little Andaman is perfectly feasible. The greatest obstacle to

fieldwork among the Ongi is the language problem. Dr. DATTA-MAJUMDER writes:

"It should be noted that very little information about the social organization of the Onge has been gathered so far on account of the barrier of language. Not a single interpreter knowing Onge language is available. We came across only two Onge men who knew just a few words of Hindi as a result of their occasional visits to Port Blair".

This was confirmed by Professor CIPRIANI who, in his letter, also mentions the two Ongi who know a little Hindi and adds: "No real Ongi interpreter is, as yet, available". RADCLIFFE-BROWN's experience had been similar. He found only two Ongi men who knew about 20 words of Hindustani.

PORTMAN seems to have been more fortunate in 1886—87. He mentions having had Ongi interpreters. These may have been members of a group of eleven persons who had been captured in the Cinque Islands, between Great and Little Andaman, in 1885 and who had been brought to Port Blair. It would be of great help for anthropological research if a few Ongi could be induced to stay some time in Port Blair and to learn either Hindi or English. In any case, however, an anthropologist wishing to do serious work on Little Andaman will have to remain long enough on the island to acquire sufficient knowledge of the language. He could prepare himself in advance for this task through a thorough study of the available literature on the Great Andaman languages (MAN, PORTMAN, TEMPLE, BASU). Although the languages are different, they are related, and their structure is probably more or less similar. For the Ongi language itself, we have only RADCLIFFE-BROWN's "Notes on the Languages of the Andaman Islands", the list of Ongi words in PORTMAN's "Manual of the Andamanese Languages" (1887) — which RADCLIFFE-BROWN found "of no service whatever" — and a vocabulary of the Ongi language, compiled by M. C. C. BONIG in 1903 and published in Port Blair.

M. C. C. BONIG, (Vocabulary of the Onge Language, exact title not available), Port Blair, 1903.

Census of India, 1901, Vol. III, *The Andaman and Nicobar Islands*, by R. C. TEMPLE, pp. 91—95 (PORTMAN's report), 117—120 (language).

Census of India, 1911, Vol. II, *The Andaman and Nicobar Islands*, by R. F. LOWIS, pp. 6, 27—29, 81—82, 88.

Census of India, 1931, Vol. II, *The Andaman and Nicobar Islands*, by R. F. LOWIS, pp. 2—5, 14—15.

Census of India, 1931, Vol. II, *The Andaman and Nicobar Islands*, by M. C. C. BONINGTON, pp. 8—11, 16—19, 22.

Our knowledge of their language is restricted to lists of words col- 114 648
lected from captive Jarawas by COLEBROOK in 1789—90 and by PORTMAN in the 19th century.

Research on the Jarawa would by highly desirable, but will be impossible as long as they remain hostile.

Census of India, 1901, Vol. III, *The Andaman and Nicobar Islands*, by Sir RICHARD C. TEMPLE, pp. 4, 52—53, 68—90, 117—121. 113

Census of India, 1911, Vol. II, *The Andaman and Nicobar Islands*, by R. F. LOWIS, pp. 7, 31—39, 82—83.

Census of India, 1921, Vol. II, *The Andaman and Nicobar Islands*, by R. F. LOWIS, pp. 5, 39—43.

Census of India, 1931, Vol. II, *The Andaman and Nicobar Islands*, by M. C. C. BONINGTON, pp. 8—9, 15—16, 23.

A. R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN, *Notes on the Languages of the Andaman Islands*, Anthropos, vol. IX, 1914, pp. 38—39.

The Andaman Islanders, 2nd ed., Cambridge, 1933, pp. 86, 410, 413—415, 423, 432—433, 439—440.

North Sentinel Island

North Sentinel is an island of about 30 square miles west of the 101
southern tip of Great Andaman. It has been briefly visited by Govern- [131]
ment officers on various occasions, but it seems that no contacts were [648]
ever made with the natives, except on December 27th, 1886, when the Ongi, who accompanied PORTMAN on his trip, "caught" some of them (Census of India, 1901, p. 92). From PORTMAN's report it does not become clear whether or not he saw these temporary captives himself. Our knowledge of the culture is restricted to a few observations on their material possessions. The communal huts differ from those of the rest of the Andamanese. The canoes differ from those of both Great and Little Andaman, but are more like those of the latter. The bows resemble those of the Jarawa and Ongi. On the [197]
basis of this it is assumed that the natives are related to the Jarawa and Ongi, but PORTMAN's Ongi companions are said to have found that the persons whom they had caught talked "an entirely different language".

In 1901 the number of the natives was estimated as 117. This 161
estimate was based on the area of the island and the assumption that the density of the population was approximately the same as that of great Andaman in precolonial times. The figure was not changed in either 1911 or 1921. In 1931 the number was estimated as 50 "on conclusions arrived at from several visits during the last decade and after counting the number of huts found and the sleeping places", but it is said that this does not necessarily mean a decrease in population. "It is believed that the population is stationary, for

161 the Sentinel islanders have been kept free from direct contact with civilization".

●114 181 [48] In the Census Report of 1931 it is said that the natives "like the Jarawas are entirely hostile", but no reason is given for this statement. Previous visitors found them exceedingly shy, but not hostile. When seeing foreigners, they simply fled into the jungle. M. C. C. BONIG who visited North Sentinel Island on the 10th of March, 1911, in the course of that year's Census operations, wrote:

"The people appear very timid and it seems not unlikely that if they are approached frequently with presents, they will become friendly of their own accord".

114 No information on North Sentinel Island more recent than the 1931 Census Report has come to our knowledge. If the situation has not changed since then, the culture of its natives should be completely intact and untouched by outer influences — a unique case among the primitive tribes of southern Asia. Here, therefore, is a truly ideal opportunity for anthropological research.

113 Census of India, 1901, Vol. III, *The Andaman and Nicobar Islands*, by Sir RICHARD C. TEMPLE, pp. 4, 92 (PORTMAN's visit).

Census of India, 1911, Vol. II, *The Andaman and Nicobar Islands*, by R. F. LOWIS, pp. 28—29 (BONIG's Report).

Census of India, 1931, Vol. II, *The Andaman and Nicobar Islands*, by M. C. C. BONINGTON, pp. 22—23.

A. R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN, *The Andaman Islanders*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, 1933, pp. 412—413, 422—423, 491—492.

9:Sarkar D-5 (1948) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Jarawa

The North Sentinel Jarawa

648 175 The taming of the South Andaman Jarawa has been a moot problem of the local government in view of their occasional raids on the forest camps and offices. On this score the North Sentinel Jarawa appear to have an important function. Nothing is known of the length of their isolation on this little island of about 15 square miles but it is probably unaffected by the punitive expeditions, that are undertaken from time to time by the local government against the South Andaman Jarawa. When BONIG and his party landed on the west coast of North Sentinel Island on March 9th 1911, they were not received with volleys of arrows, but instead the "eight men on the beach and another five in two canoes" disappeared in the jungle. The same was true of those seen previously on the east coast. BONIG and his party visited some huts, which [342] were of the lean-to type, and also went some miles inland without being troubled. BONIG therefore rightly concludes the following:

"The people appear very timid and it seems not unlikely that if they are approached frequently with presents, they will become friendly of their own accord. If this fails the small area of the island and the open nature of the forest would also make it easy to capture some, and after kind treatment let them go again".

000 As far as the present writer's knowledge goes this method has not yet been tried, but its utility lies perhaps in taming their South Andaman congeners. They could be made to settle round Port Campbell and other suitable areas on the west coast. A few communal huts built according to the plan and style of the South Andaman Jarawa should first of all be provided. They should be given all chances of expanding their population. Such an opportunity they are likely to seize if they suffer in any way from population pressure or from shortage of food and shelter. If their canoes are not seaworthy they should be provided with suitable water transport so that there may be frequent intercourse between the two islands.

The South Andaman Jarawa

● 114 Although no systematic ethnographic studies on the Jarawa have been undertaken, RADCLIFFE BROWN (1922) gave sufficient hints regarding the unity of the material culture of the Negritos as a whole. Physically they belong to the Negrito race, as can be seen from the few natives captured from time to time by the local government (SARKAR, 1952). The punitive expeditions 648 have also brought to light some important facts of their material culture. 342 Thus, during the punitive expedition of March 1911 (LOWIS, 1912) near Pap-lunta-jig a big communal hut was found which had been erected on the ridge of a hill and which measured 45′ × 30′ × 15′. It was raised high above the ground and was supported by a number of stout piles. The structure [184] was different from the Onge communal huts in that the floor was raised, while in the latter the floor is just the surface of the earth. The eves of the Onge communal hut touch the ground.

9:Sarkar D-5 (1948) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Jarawa

726 141
Right arm ... 2 feet 4 inches
Right index finger ... 4 inches
Right toe ... 2 inches
Length of right leg ... 2 feet 11 inches
Length of right foot ... 9 ½ inches

726 411 177 The iron blade of the arrowhead is 17 cm long and 4.9 cm broad at the base. It is mounted on a wooden shaft 86.7 cm long. The barb at the base consists of an ordinary iron nail which is bent at its sharp end and fixed with bark threads impregnated with resin. It must have been obtained from a forest camp during some raid.

726 114 According to GUPTA (1955) the above mentioned incident was not a premeditated raid. He thinks – after a careful inquiry into the above incident – that the Jarawa "came out in the open, early in the morning and walked right into the camp and did not attempt to shoot, [which] would warrant a presumption that they meant a friendly visit".

648 Since the last few years the Andaman Government has not encouraged any punitive expedition among the Jarawa. This is also evident from one of the Senior Officer's opinion quoted above. The forest workers, on the other hand, still have to face the Jarawa. They think that since no punitive action is taken against them they are gradually getting bolder. It is reported that the Jarawa beat the trunks of trees within their hearing. Consequently all these buttress beatings are immediately reported to the higher authorities and armed guards protecting the forest workers are alerted. If that is the case then the Jarawa do not attack without a warning! But who knows what they really mean? Do they want to communicate with us? Or is it a means of communication among themselves?

The Jarawa Problem

648 114 It has already been hinted at the problem of taming the Jarawa. It was one of the special aims of the Government of India to arrange a substation of its Department of Anthropology. As a result of this the present writer visited the Andaman Islands twice and was of the opinion that the substation of the Department of Anthropology should be stationed at Long Island and not at Port Blair. There were no express plans but to carry out anthropological studies of the aborigines of the various islands. It has not yet been possible to census the friendly Onge properly (SARKAR, 1960).

The primary desideratum appears to be a knowledge of the native language. As far as the present writer knows, there is no one in the various Government departments who is acquainted with the Andamanese language, not to mention the other languages spoken on the varius islands. The Onge

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[4] A Jarawa vocabulary was collected from the captive pregnant Jarawa woman by Mrs. CHENGAPPA and Mrs. CHAUDHURI, and it has been published by the Andaman Government.

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

[Introductory, P. ii]

FOREWORD

Shri Probhat Kumar Sen, M.Sc. has brought out an interesting monograph on the Land and People of the Andamans based on his field work for a number of years. As a post-graduate student Shri Sen selected this area for geographical study and prepared a thesis for his Master's degree. This appears to be the revised and detailed version of his thesis. The Andaman and Nicobar islands are in the Bay of Bengal, and prove to be an ideal spot for rehabilitating surplus population of India, provided it is done on a planned basis, keeping an eye to the potential wealth of the islands specially in its virgin forests. Shri Sen has referred to the salient features of the regional geography of the islands and traced the growth of population in these islands since the eighties of the last century.

I hope that this important treatise will focus the attention of all concerned to this relatively unknown underdeveloped islands, which have immense possibility of playing an important role in the economy of India.

Dept. of Geography
Calcutta University
11th May, 1962

S. P. CHATTERJEE

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

[Introductory, P. iv]
[Introductory, P. iii, is blank]

PREFACE

The dearth of literature but considerable curiosity about the islands because of the presence of the aborigines, the development of the penal colony and in recent years the colonisation of the refugees, have inspired the author to write a geographical treatise of these islands covering almost all their physical and socio-economic aspects. The interest of the author about these islands of course dates back to some 8 or 9 years for preparing a thesis about these islands as a part fulfilment of his M. Sc. course and the author with the limited time and money made some personal enquiries for the collection of data and the assessment of the situation. The access to the data and the other research materials and the visits to the different parts of the islands were possible through the kind permission and help of the-then Chief Commissioner Sri S. N. Maitra, the Forest Officers, the Head Master of Port Blair High School. Dr. L. Cipriani besides a host of other officers and friends in the islands and also at Calcutta. However the ultimate preparation of the thesis became possible for the kind guidance of Dr. S. P. Chatterjee, Head of the Dept of Geography, Calcutta University.

Anybody faces a tremendous problem in conducting a thorough survey of the islands arising out of the poor communication facilities both on land and water, and more so on account of the very few literatures on the islands. The author cannot demand a thorough enquiry in all parts of the islands and his analysis of the different aspects has been derived more from the conclusions of sample survey.

Though a long time has elapsed since the preparation of the thesis in the year 1955, the author has been, on the whole, eager to incorporate all the latest informations of the islands. The present book is partially a reproduction of his previous thesis with some additional facts and informations and the objective of such changes has been to prepare a comprehensive geographical treatise rather than focussing one particular aspect as was done in the thesis i.e. the colonisation problems of the islands. Besides this, additional chapters on the aboriginal population, the overall assessment and also a geographical account on the Nicobar Islands have been added. The Nicobar Islands, though form only a sidelight of the book, also command a separate geographical treat-

10: Sen .K-3, 4 (ca..1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

Island	*Area*
Havelock and 6 other islands in the Ritchie's Archipelago Group	94.20
Rutland and 3 other islands in the South Andaman group of islands	73.86
Tarmughli and 4 other islands in the Labyrnth island	12.20
Little Andaman	289.90
166 other islands	430.97

But regarding the above statistics, Sri H. R. Shivdasani, I.C.S. writes as follows:—

'Obviously the area of 430.97 square miles for the other small islands is incorrect and far too much. It gives an average area of 2 square miles per island in which case they deserve individual mention when other islands of less than 1 square mile in area have come to special notice. Forest officers themselves admit that these 166 small islands cannot have a total area of 1430.97 square miles. We may assume that the information of the Punjab Delegation[1] is correct. Even so it would seem that if out of the other islands (735 square miles) we exclude Baratang, 90 square miles, and Little Andaman 290 square miles, there will be 200 small islands with a total area of 335 square miles'.[2]

The Andamans lie 590 miles from the Hooghly mouth, 120 miles from Cape Negrais of Burma and 340 miles from the northern extremity of Sumatra. In spite of the very close situation of the islands to the crowded countries like the mainland of India, Burma and the Indonesian countries, the contact has been quite feeble.

1 The Punjab Delegation went to the Andamans to explore the possibility of colonisation in the islands.

2 Shivdasani was sent to the Andamans with a party by the Government of India to study the aspect of colonisation in the islands in the year 1949.

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

[P. 11]

CHAPTER III

PHYSICAL SET-UP

The Andaman & Nicobar Islands form a part of the continuous ridge which runs form the Cape Negrais of Burma through the Preparis and Coco Islands to the Andamans and continues further to the Nicobars and Sumatra. The whole ridge has a geological affinity with the Arakan Yoma of Burma and Sumatra and Java. The ridge is primarily of Eocene formation and forms a part of the great Alpine-Himalayan system. Prof. Gregory holds the view that "the main line continues eastward through the Himalaya until the resistance of the Chinese plateau has traced it southward and part of it now lies beneath the Bay of Bengal, it reappears in Sumatra and continues through Java and across the Malaya Archipelago."[1] But some modifications of Gregory's view have been achieved and presently it is believed that this ridge is a loop of the main Himalayan axis comparable to the Persian loop in western Asia and Apennine loop in Europe.[2] The ridge is not continuous but is interrupted in many places, of which the 3 main channels are worth considering. The depth of the channels increases from north to south. [133]

(1) Preparis channel in between north and south Preparis islands has a depth of over 500 fathoms.

(2) The Degree Channel, between the Andamans and the Nicobars, is approximately 400 fathoms deep.

(3) Great Channel lying between Great Nicobar Island and Sumatra is about 750 to 800 fathoms deep.

The peaks of the mountains now form the islands and in some places the coastline slopes very steeply to the ocean.

GEOLOGY OF THE ANDAMANS

The present knowledge of the geology of the islands is largely the outcome of the investigations done by R. D. Oldham (1885), Kurz (1868), Gee, and G. H. Tipper. Even at present a thorough geological knowledge of the islands has not been achieved and this has been due to a number [114]

1. Gregory, J. W.—The Structure of Asia, London, Methuen. [113]
2. Swell, R. B. (1925)—Geography of the Andaman Basin, Geographic and Oceanographic Researches in Indian waters, Mem. Asiatic. Soc Bengal IX, No. 1.

[text continues on p. 13]

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

of reasons. Firstly, a thorough survey of the islands is very difficult because of the dense forests and hostile aborigines. Secondly, the Government also cared little to take pains for initiating such a work. Regarding the inconveniences of geologising Tipper writes "the thickness of the jungles may be judged from the fact that our rate of progress varied from half a mile to a mile an hour. The dense jungle with a lack of exposures made geologising very difficult."[1]

Rink first postulated that the Andaman-Nicobar ridge was elevated to its present height from ocean bottom. He describes the chain of islands as consisting "partly of those stratified deposits which occupied the level bottom of the sea before their appearance. and partly of plutonic rocks which pierced through the former and came to the surface through upheaval.

To the two above-mentioned formations has to be added a third. which is the result of the chemical and mechanical destruction of the plutonic masses; it is local and consists of clays and pebbles derived from the underlying strata."

On the whole, the mountain ranges of the Andamans are of sandstones of Eocene Age with intensive rocks of serpentine in places. Large parts of the North Andaman have been grouped under the Archipelago Series by Oldham. Tipper considers the conglomerates of North and Middle Andamans as a facies of the Eocene deposit. Between the mountain ranges which run north to south, some undulating ground is found which often consists of impermeable blue clay beds, indurated shales and conglomerates containing pebbles of quartz and jasper. Coral reefs and the raised beaches form the recent and sub-recent formation of the Andamans. The formation of the Andaman-Nicobar ridge has been assigned to late Cretaceous age.

Oldham has distinguished two sedimentary formations in the Andamans besides serpentine series. He named them as

(1) Port Blair Series, &
(2) Archipelago Series[2]

The Port Blair series is so named because it is dominant in and around Port Blair, i.e., in the South Andaman. The rock types are gray sandstones with interbedded slaty shales, frequently consisting nests

1. Tipper, G. H.—The geology of the Andaman Islands with reference to the Nicobars. Mem. Geol. Sur. Ind., Vol 35. Part 4.

2. Oldham, R. D.—Notes on the Geology of the Andaman Islands, Rec. Geol. Sur. of Ind., Vol. 18, Part 3, 1885.

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

133 of coaly matter and occasionally beds of conglomerate and pale gray limestone as subsidiary members.

The Archipelago series, as the name implies, is dominant in the islands of the Archipelago group. It consists of soft limestones formed of coral and shell—and, soft calcareous sandstones and soft white clays with occasionally a band of conglomerates.

Later on G. H. Tipper further clarified the geology of the Andamans and as analysed by Tipper, the 'Port Blair Series' and 'Archipelago Series' of Oldham correspond to Eocene (Lower Lutetian) and Miocene formations respectively. According to Tipper, the greatest authority of the geology of the Andamans, the following formations have been distinguished in the Andamans:—

Recent and sub-recent	... Raised beaches and coral reef etc.
Miocene	... Clays of Ritchie's Archipelago.
Miocene (Burdigalian)	... Foraminiferal limestones, shell marks of Paget Island.
Eocene (Lower Lutetian)	... Conglomerates of the North and Middle Islands. Sandstones of the South Islands.
Cretaceous	... Serpentine Series.
Pre-tertiary	... In part lower Cretaceous, scattered expanses of quartzites, jaspers and porcellanic limestones.

Of all formations, the Eocene rocks are most widely prevalent. They occupy the 3 main islands i.e., North, Middle and South Andamans and have got two facies of the same deposit. In the North and part of the Middle Andamans the prevailing rock is conglomerate while in the South Andaman it is sandstone.

The Sandstone Area of the South.

The sandstones of the South are even-grained blue grey micaceous sandstones but are sometimes non-micaceous and calcareous intercalated slabs are frequent. Conglomerates also occur in white quartz pebbles of sandy matrix. The rocks have experienced honey-comb weathering because of the irregular distribution of the cementing materials.

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[114] It should be remembered that the geological survey of the Middle Andaman has not been done properly.

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

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CHAPTER VIII

THE PEOPLE

The study of the people of the Andamans is rendered extremely interesting by virtue of the great diversities in the types of population. Obviously for the islands like the Andamans the diversities of population are far out of proportion. The islands remained as an abode of the aborigines, the negritoes, in complete seclusion and the only outside interference that had tampered the islands were the occasional raids by the sea pirates from Malaya. The beliefs about the occasional exchanges of commodities and ideas of the pirates with the Andamanese and the trade of the Andamanese for being sold as slaves in the courts of Siam and Cambodia are still now questions of doubt. However, it was only at the end of the 18th century, with the attempt of the formation of settlements and later on, of the penal settlement, that there began an influx of foreign peoples, mainly from the different parts of the mainland of India. With the formation of the penal colony, convicts were brought over to the islands in numbers and also a few attempts of free colonisation by some people from Burma and India were made. The convicts who were from the different parts of India and the free colonizors who were diverse enough in their social and cultural traits gave a character of heterogeneity to the islands. It was only after the attainment of the independence that the settlement of the East Bengal refugees and of some people from South India is taking place in the Andamans. This is going to add further to the cultural diversity of the islands. This scheme of colonisation of the East Bengal refugees and of some people from South India is the first attempt of some importance for the permanent colonization in the islands.

Such a variety in the types of people, can be broadly divided into three groups.

(a) The aboriginal population.
(b) The Later Settlers, and
(c) The New Settlers.

The aboriginal population belongs to the negrito stock and therefore, has an affinity with the Semangs and Sakais of Malaya, the Veddas of Ceylon and the other negrito groups of Southeast Asia. Some attribute the origin of these aborigines to the settlement of some Portuguese negro slaves who had survived by coming to these islands after a ship-

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Negritos

161 yond doubt that the impact of the people having better material culture on the aboriginal population has resulted in an acceleration of their decay. The aborigines of the Great Andaman Group are the first people in the islands to come in contact with the later settlers and the early incorporation of many of the vices of these new comers have resulted in the furtherance of their decay. Such devastating effects are also observed in the case of many other aboriginal groups. The Red Indians of U.S.A. and the native population of Malanesia are only a few among the many others who are such victims of decline, more so immediately after the impact of the later settlers.

101 161 162 Whatever inadequate data are available about the number of aborigines and the other demographic characteristics, they show the nature of imbalance which stands in the way of their successful growth.

Table No. 1*

The aboriginal population.

Tribe	1858	1885	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951
	100		39	36	17	7		
Karo	500		96	71	48	24		
Tabo	200		48	62	18	6		
Yeve	700		218	180	101	46		
Kede	500		59	34	6	2		
Juwai	300	2000	48	9	5	0		23
Koj	100		11	2	0	0		
Bojigyab	300		50	36	9	1		
Bea	500		37	19	1	0		
Belawa	300		19	15	4	2		
			625	464	209	88		23
Onge	700	1250	672	631	346	350		600
Jarawa	600		585	231	231	170		350
	4800	3250	1882	1326	786	608		973

114 161 In spite of the fact that the data of the aboriginal population, as given in the Table No. 1, is far from accurate, a very good idea of the nature of decline of the aboriginal population can be assessed. As is evident from the Table, the population of 4800 in 1858 has reduced to 608 in 1931 in less than 75 years.

* The figures are not at all accurate.

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

162
114 The Onge population has been estimated by various authorities and the surveys of Dr. Cipriani have brought to light some important characteristics of the Onge population. Cipriani has ascertained the total Onge population to be 607, of which 229 are adult males, 241 are adult women and 137 children. Of the 137 children, he has detected 48 boys and 62 girls and about the rest he is not sure. However, the procedure followed by Cipriani and the conclusions derived by him, which are contrary to the previous knowledge, have been vehemently criticised by Dr. Sarkar.[1] Sarkar opines that the procedure of enumeration by counting the number of sleeping places in a communal hut is liable to gross errors because of the roving nature of the Onges of whom an appreciable number has no sleeping place. The determination of the sex-ratio from the communal huts are also more difficult. As a matter of fact the precision of enumeration, as is apparent from the census of Cipriani, cannot be attained and the deficiencies in the procedure of Cipriani have very well been brought to light by questioning and ultimate rejection by arguments. He writes that, 'His (Cipriani's) account is difficult to follow. There are very few relevant data regarding the actual Onge population. He has estimated the population instead of giving a simple population figure for each of the Onge settlements he visited. His estimates are based on the number of sleeping places in a hut, though nothing definite could be found either with regard to the total number of communal huts or the sleeping places. Then to find out the sex of the individuals from the sleeping places seems preposterous. Cipriani (1956) estimates the total Onge population to be 607, comprising 229 adult males, 241 adult women and 137 children. He was able to determine the sex of the children in about 80% of the cases, since immediately after the above quotation he states: 'Of the latter 48 are boys, 62 girls and of 27 sex could not be ascertained.' In the same paper and just two sentences before, where he gave the above figures, he mentioned a total of 497 individuals, comprising 242 men and 255 women. If the latter figures are meant only for adults then with the addition of 137 children to the above adult population of 497, the total Onge population appears to be 634. Even then the discrepancies in the adult population remain to be explained; it adds up to 470 (229 males, 241 females) once and to 497 (242 males, 255 females) another time.

Secondly, the enumeration of Cipriani shows a higher feminine population, whereas as analysed by Dr. Sarkar, all the previous estimates

[113]

1 Sarkar, S. S—Analecta et Additamenta, Anthropos 55, 1960.

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

of the Onges actually seen, show a predominance of males. The determination of sex-ratio by Cipriani is no doubt very much speculative in nature and as is evident from the extract of the comment of Dr. Sarkar, Cipriani himself has been contrary to his own versions, at times. All the previous censuses of the actual Onges met and counted show a predominance of males and this happens to be the logical argument of Dr. Sarkar to conclude that the Onges population has been characterised by high masculinity. High masculinity always imply a very high predominance of males over females but never in the previous censuses we find such a high predominance. The census of Cipriani shows a slightly higher number of females than males and the attainment of such a slight predominance of females over males is never a physical impossibility. As such we may believe that there may be a slight predominance of females over males though the procedure adopted by Cipriani is by no means a precise one.

Dr. Sarkar, though apparently justified, totally rejects the procedure of Cipriani. Census of population is in itself a very difficult job and it is always liable to errors even in the advanced countries. Therefore, the enumeration of Dr. Cipriani is highly praiseworthy and because of the difficulties of contacting all the Onges the enumeration of the communal huts and the number of sleeping beds are no doubt very important clues for an intelligent guess about their number.

Though Dr. Sarkar pleads for the predominance of males by taking into account the number of Onges actually seen and counted (which show a predominance of males), the research expeditions undertaken by Sri R. C. Nigam[1] under the auspices of the Anthropological Survey of India in March, 1955 and December, 1956 made him fairly well-acquainted with the island of Little Andaman. From his own actual counting, a higher number of females have been counted than males. He was able to contact 161 Onge individuals of which 138 belonged to the 45 family units and the rest were 'unattached'[2] individuals i.e., widows, unmarried

1 Nigam, R. C.—Little known tribes of the Andaman Islands—Their problems and prospect; Vanyajati; Vol. VIII, January, 1960, No. 1; Vol. VIII, April, 1960, No. 2 and Vol. VIII, July, 1960, No. 3.

2 A family is considered to be comprised of parents and children whereas, if the father or mother of a family is dead, the members have been called as 'unattached' type by R. C. Nigam.

has a moustache, whereas pure Negritos have no body or facial hair.

THE JARAWAS

For obvious reasons I was unable to carry out any studies on the Jarawas. Apart from a restricted area around Port Blair, on the east coast of Great Andaman, the whole island is a tangle of tropical vegetation, in many places impenetrable, or at most passable only by hacking a way through. A few roads radiate from Port Blair, but none penetrate more than twenty kilometres or so from the township. To the north of the town is a well-maintained police cordon that stretches right across the island from east to west to prevent infiltration by the Jarawas; those in the south were all rounded up some time ago. Only beyond the cordon do the Jarawas maintain their rule over the virgin forest almost unchallenged. Like all the Andamanese they are Negritos, small in stature and extremely dark skinned. Obsessed by a fierce hatred for anyone outside their own group, enemies even of the other Andamanese, they roam through the forest with their deadly arrows. Shot from their powerful bows, their dagger-sharp arrows penetrate deep into the body of the victim – they can transfix a man's chest. The bloody skirmishing which has gone on for the last hundred years shows no signs of lessening even today.

The Jarawa ferocity increased as the result of grave mishandling of the situation by the foreigners. In this connection the following sentences from Portman's *History* may be quoted: 'On our arrival the Jarawas were quiet and inoffensive towards us, nor did they ever disturb us, until we took to continuously molesting them by inciting the coastal Andamanese against them. After a few years of this disturbance, the life of the Jarawas became very hard and in retaliation they began to attack us.' As the author in part recognizes, 'It was our fault if the Jarawas became hostile'. This was a fundamental error. Petty pilfering committed in perfect innocence by the Jarawas, ignorant of Western ideas of individual property, led to vicious punitive expeditions. To this end fire-arms were given to the hereditary enemies of the Jarawas, the Arioto. Elated by their unexpected power, they at once began slaughtering any Jarawa within sight, and enjoyed themselves hugely.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Jarawas

175
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Portman, who was for a long time the English administrator in the Andamans, is one of the greatest authorities on the islands; in his excellent history he refers, with frank sincerity and detail, to the methods adopted in the anti-Jarawa wars. He tells of the payment of the Arioto with food, tobacco and alcohol, arms and ammunition for their ruthless fight against their forest kin. Since at one time the struggle seemed to the outsiders to be lacking in ardour and intensity, Portman received an order in 1884 to deprive the Arioto of all provisions, starting with food. This he was forced to obey, perhaps unwillingly. He certainly loved the Andamanese, and he understood and honestly appreciated their needs.

As he later did on Little Andaman, Portman then tried to approach the Jarawas; not on Great Andaman where they had become too dangerous, but on North Sentinel. He proposed to improve upon the work already initiated (with disastrous results) by Homfray who went to the island in March 1867, escorted by police and by a small group of Arioto. The hostility between Andamanese from different localities immediately made even the Sentinellese keenly resentful of the foreigners who were trying to make friends with them under the protection of their age-old enemies. The foreigners would in fact probably have been quite well received if they had not taken Arioto with them.

Homfray referred to naked men on the beach who fled with loud cries into the forest when pursued by Arioto. Portman repeated the same mistake. In his photographs, still to be seen in the Indian Museum at Calcutta, he actually uses the expression 'Hunting Jarawas' among the captions to the pictures he took on North Sentinel.

After several abortive expeditions by Portman, visits to North Sentinel were very few and far between until recent years. In 1926 a German, whose name became anglicized to Bonington, an intelligent timber merchant at Port Blair, became a government official in the Andamans once he had assumed British nationality. He reports having seen some Jarawas, who rapidly disappeared into the forest uttering such wild cries that they hardly seemed human. In 1953 other Indian government officials approached the island, and a lone Jarawa on the beach threatened them with an arrow. I myself planned to make a landing on 20 April 1954, but was prevented by a rough sea. I went right round the island, but no Jarawas appeared.

114

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Jarawas
Onges

114 This was a pity, as I knew that my Indian and Burmese companions were ready to run any risk with the prudence they had already shown in Little Andaman towards the Onges. Since North Sentinel is flat and its forest not impassable, a peace mission led by men accustomed to dealing with people like the Andamanese, though it would certainly need more than a brief stay, would probably be ultimately successful.

124 114 [648] My sole source of local information on the Jarawas was the wife of a government official, who had tended a pregnant woman and four children who were captured during one of the punitive expeditions on Bluff Island. She gave me a great deal of useful information, and indeed the greater part of our scanty ethnographical and linguistic data on the Jarawas has been obtained through her.

THE ONGES

177 648 114 133 Until 1952 the attitude of the various groups of Onges was very similar. Along the coast, however, they had already had some contact many years ago with a limited number of outsiders. Compared with the Jarawas they have been uniquely fortunate among surviving primitive peoples in that their extremely fertile territory has remained immune from invasion. In this they have been helped by their geographical isolation as much as by their own ferocity. Indeed Little Andaman, surrounded by an ocean that frequently turns into the proverbial boiling cauldron, presents grave risks to anyone trying to land. I had considerable experience of this myself; on many occasions I nearly gave up when the boat was overturned by giant breakers. On one occasion on the south coast of the island we were flung into the sea, and the empty boat capsized and dragged me down. No one was in a position to come to my rescue, but the momentary relief of an enormous return wave enabled me to extricate myself. The previous day the breakers had crashed down one after another and smashed us against the coral reef which runs right round Little Andaman. Our baggage and provisions had disappeared, and until help arrived we were forced to remain for two gruelling days without water or food, with no protection from the sun and in constant danger of being attacked by the Onges.

000 During the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries

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Editor's Note

The editing and publication of any posthumous work is inevitably a difficult task, and the preparation of the present volume has been made the more so as the material came into our hands only after Professor Cipriani's death, and was clearly intended to become a final expression of his scientific and philosophical experience. 114 ●

Among the readers of this book there may be scientists who will deplore on principle any attempt to present scientific observations in a form attractive to the general reader. Happily, their numbers are dwindling rapidly, and we make no apology for trying to bring to as wide a public as possible observations which, quite apart from any intrinsic scientific value, may help in some measure to remedy the paucity of material so far published on the peoples of the Andaman Islands, and stimulate the further research which Cipriani himself felt to be so urgently needed.

On going through the mass of data left by Professor Cipriani it became abundantly clear that not only did he intend the scientific matter to be published in detail in various scientific journals, but that this resumé of his observations was intended to be a framework within which he hoped to set out the views to which he had been led by his experiences as an anthropologist over a period of many years. It was equally clear that not everyone would feel in sympathy with these views, and the philosophy which they express. While, therefore, there is no doubt that Professor Cipriani would have been fully able and prepared to support them scientifically, I have not felt competent to do so, nor, frankly, would I feel it my province as a layman to engage in controversy over 'big bang' and 'steady state' theories of evolution. The present volume, therefore,

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● 114 does not and cannot claim to be other than a record of the late Professor Cipriani's observations and experiences in the Andamans, and as such let it be judged.

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Foreword

The following pages represent a brief account of my observations during a period of nearly two years which I spent in the Andaman Islands, living for part of the time with the Onges, who provide the major part of my material.

I had for a long time been interested in the vexed question of the origins of the pygmies, and after spending some years studying them in Africa and in Asia I came to the conclusion that the peoples of the Andaman archipelago might well represent the 'purest' living example of Negrito stock and culture, remaining as they have in complete isolation until very recently. After a brief visit to the Islands in 1951, therefore, and with the warm co-operation of all the officials and government departments concerned, I was able, beginning in 1952, to spend a total of 634 days in the Islands, 162 of them living in the forests of Little Andaman with the Onges.

It would be impossible to list individually the Indian government officials who aided me in every way, but I wish to record here my deepest appreciation of the courtesy and help extended to me by all the departments and individuals with whom I had dealings, both in the Andamans and in India itself. To all of them, whatever their rank or station, are due my warmest thanks – without their help these notes, incomplete as they are, could never have been written.

Armed with gifts of mirrors, glass beads, cloth and, above all, tobacco, I was able to make friends with the reputedly ferocious people of the Andamans and to make observations which, though but a beginning, will I hope lead others to carry further the work which I was able to begin. During my visits to the Islands I was able to set up a museum at Port Blair, where I hope ultimately to

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colonel who had accompanied him. After a series of similar incidents involving other people Portman went to Bumila Creek on 10 November 1891, for revenge. A number of Onges, including the one responsible for wounding the colonel, were captured and taken to Port Blair.

Other visits by various people followed, always very brief and always limited to the coast, but there were no landings of note. Various expeditions visited the coast of the island for a few days and even made contact with some of the Onges, but the interior of the island remained as unknown as before. In February 1951 I accompanied one of these expeditions, which again did not go beyond the coast. Those five days on Little Andaman were most revealing, and enabled me to plan the landing I subsequently made in 1952. I saw that the island was teeming with game, that wild fruit and edible roots were plentiful, and that the sea round the island was full of fish, lobsters, huge crabs and turtles. Moreover, the turtles laid eggs in the sand where it was very easy to find them by following the beasts' tracks. I realized that it would be unnecessary to bring in provisions, and that it would be possible to enter the forest unencumbered with anything more than guns, cartridges and a few cooking utensils. Every day during this short stay I went with a police escort as far as possible into the forest in order to reconnoitre. In some places I noticed recent traces of small bare feet, but no Onges appeared.

Realizing that mobility was essential for any expedition into the interior of the island, I prepared at Port Blair a number of small watertight metal boxes to hang from the shoulder, to take a minimum of necessities. The largest items in my own personal baggage were a mosquito-net, a very light hammock and note-books. Cartridges were to be divided among the boxes. Tents, camp-beds and other large equipment would have to be left in a base camp, which would be established on the coast and left under police guard with radio transmission apparatus for communication with Port Blair. If necessary, a portable radio could follow us.

Several factors made me want to return. There was the mystery of the unknown interior of the island. There was the prevailing lack of information of any kind about the Onges, even of their numbers. I wanted too to carry out an investigation of their somatic characteristics, using the greatest possible number of individuals.

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After submitting my programme for the approval of the various Indian authorities, I finally left Calcutta in the motor vessel *Maharaja* and arrived in Port Blair on the evening of 11 December 1951.

Once arrived on Great Andaman I began to make preparations, but for some time the sea remained so rough that the crossing to Little Andaman was impossible. In order not to lose time, I went as far as Middle Andaman, where I started excavating an ancient kitchen-midden left by a group which has now disappeared.[1] Eventually, in March 1952, there began for me what was to become a fascinating if dangerous adventure, which continued for several years, in the dry seasons, and which I hope will prove to have been of some value.

Even now we know little of the anthropology of the Onges. They are Negritos, and therefore people of small stature. They are not, however, as small as the African pygmies, or Negrillos, who are the tiniest people in the world and who are in many respects very different from the Asiatic Negritos. Among the latter, individuals of over 4 feet are giants, while the normal height is substantially less.

In their somatic and cultural characteristics the Andamanese differ from all Asiatics, including their closest connections the Semang of the Malaccan peninsula and the Aetà of the Philippines. There is however some similarity between the three groups, indicating a distinctive common ancestry. The Negritos of today constitute the sole and fragmentary remains of a people who in ancient times were spread over a large part of Asia, and there is no lack of evidence to support their former presence much farther east and south, well into Oceania.

The word Negrito means 'small negro', but the name is inappropriate. It was originally given to these people because of the colour of their skin and the woolly texture of their hair. In their bodily proportions, however, as well as in the morphology of the head as a whole, and in particular the structure of the mouth, they resemble the Negroes considerably less than do African pygmies, who are in their turn quite a distinct type. The Negritos have some superficial affinity to peoples of small stature in New Guinea and Melanesia, such as the Tapiro, the Cameveca, the Cai and the Pesechem (or

[1] See page 69.

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Many Onges, in fact, have fine features,
142 and some of the women have a certain beauty and grace of move-
[148] ment, with a dignified walk and restrained gestures, despite their utter lack of any sense of shame. The sclera are very white, and the highly characteristic contrast between the intense black of the skin and the startling white of the eyes gives the Andamanese a ferocious appearance, which on smiling turns into a curiously childish ex-
151 pression (see further, p. 19). It is a curious fact that although the
145 Onges have remarkable sight (p. 47), few of them can close each eye separately, although they are all completely ambidextrous.

144 In examining the child I had particularly in mind the very short
142 stature of the pygmies both of Asia and Africa, which is regarded
164 by some as pathological. The Andamanese have been described as Negroes who have degenerated through genetical isolation. This theory holds that they are descended from slaves who fled from the Portuguese after a shipwreck. I do not regard this as tenable. Pygmies in general, and the Andamanese in particular, are well-proportioned and physically outwardly normal. One cannot speak of dwarfism as determining their characteristics: this implies abnormal development as the result of hypophyseal disorder or
[143] thyroid imbalance. Cases of achondroplastic dwarfism are known among the pygmies of Africa, particularly where there has been mixing with Negroes, and these patients are sometimes taller than their normal kinfolk, but I found no cases among the pygmies of Asia.

142 One characteristic of the Bushmen which does occur among the Andamanese is steatopigia in both males and females. This is nor-
[114] mally much more prevalent in females, and indeed before my visit to the Andamans von Eickstedt held that it was non-existent in males. I had always disagreed with this view, and was able to verify its occurrence in both males and females.

Dobson in the nineteenth century recorded in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* of London, the unusual appearance of the buttocks in the Andamanese, although he did not specifically refer to the phenomenon as steatopygia, and went only so far as to suppose it the result of an unusual accumulation of fat in the gluteal area. To him, however, must go the credit for the first observation.

114 His observation led scientists – in my view wrongly – to compare
142 the Andamanese with the Bushmen. The presence of steatopygia,
144

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and the 'peppercorn' hair (disposed in tufts with bare areas) do indeed recall the Bushmen, but superficial resemblances are not enough to classify the two peoples as at all closely related. There is an important difference between the two in the structure and cross-section of the hair. Hairs from the Onges which were examined in Calcutta were remarkably uniform, indicating the racial purity of the people, unlike those of the Arioto, which showed considerable variation in cross-section, from the almost circular straight hair of the Mongoloid type, to the flattened, almost remiform hair of the original Negritos.

Different, too, is the shape of the head; I have never seen in the Negritos the typical Bushmen head, with the prominent occiput, and I saw no Andamanese with the pseudo-mongoloid appearance of the eyes which occurs in Bushmen.

The hands and feet are also different. Among the Kung women of the northern Kalahari in particular I saw delicate hands with very long metacarpals and a very small thumb, the elongated metacarpals displacing the thumb towards the wrist. None of the Negritos appear to have anything resembling this; their hands are always rather broad. Moreover, the feet of the male Onges are nearly always flat while those of the women tend to turn in, recalling the small peoples of Indonesia and New Guinea, but not the Bushmen.

An interesting though not congenital abnormality in the Andamanese results from the carrying of weights slung from the head from too early an age. Loads are always carried on their backs by a rope made of bark, the weight being taken on the forehead. The rope presses on the head in the region of the bregma and creates the so-called bregmatic furrow. This is more marked in females, as the women normally do most of the carrying. Even the children travel on their parents' backs, hanging like parcels, until the age of five or six when they are old enough to follow the group on their own.

The Abor, a mongoloid people of small stature in the mountains of North-West Assam, carry loads in the same way, but with no resulting head furrow. The Andamanese have softer cranial bones, and the result of load-bearing is therefore clearly visible. As it occurs in both sexes, it is often hard if not impossible to determine sex from skulls if the pelvis is absent. The long bones are not of

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142 147 482 much assistance in this respect, as the muscular insertions are exaggerated in both sexes, both being subjected to continued physical effort resulting in muscular bulk.

142 147 164 [304] [515] One quite outstanding physical feature in the Onges is their teeth. The palate is unusually arched, unlike that of the African pygmies or the Bushmen. The teeth, which are never filed or cut, as many primitive peoples do for decorative purposes, are very white; caries is rare, and although never cleaned the teeth are retained till late in life. A common abnormality is that the lateral incisors are as pointed as the canines. This, with the whiteness of the teeth and eyes against the blackness of the skin, gives the Onges a sinister appearance, which may account for the old description of the Andamanese as men with ferocious dogs' heads. The only (summary) cleaning the Onge teeth receive is the use of toothpicks, thinner and rather longer than the European variety and made from the tough, flexible bark of a certain reed. After use, they are carefully thrust into the hair for future occasions. Every Onge has one or more threaded through the hair on top of the head.

142 515

142 147 [264] [514] The strength of the Onge teeth enables their owners to champ their way through what are for us inconceivable quantities of food, both animal and vegetable, which is chewed slowly and determinedly, dust, earth, sand and all, and then swallowed without apparent ill effects, other than the flatulence arising from overconsumption of animal matter. But the Onges use their teeth for other purposes besides eating. In time the teeth become worn down by the inevitable grinding of dirt and grit, but this does not prevent the Onges from continuing to chew the bark of trees and cords, which is a lifelong occupation. This duty falls mainly on the women, and I have seen aged women, their teeth worn almost to the gums, doggedly chewing bark as their contribution to the communal life of the group. The strength of the teeth is unbelievable – I have seen children of ten to fifteen years crush nails up to two millimetres thick, and dent lumps of iron.

● 114 123 142 147 [37] I myself once had good cause to be grateful for their power. My party and I found ourselves stranded in the forest on South Brother without guns or even knives, and without cooking utensils. There were large clutches of turtle eggs buried in the sand nearby and my two Onge companions pointed out a coconut tree loaded with nuts (which turned out to be the only one on the islands, seeded

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from a nut carried by the sea from some tree hundreds of miles away). There was thus ample food for several days, if only the coconuts could be opened. The Onges' teeth solved the problem. They attacked the nuts close to the stalk, stripping off great chunks of the fibrous outer covering until they had uncovered the three 'eyes'. These they dug out with a sharp piece of stick, so that we were able to drink the juice and then break up the nuts to get at the flesh. Never did coconuts taste so good!

Round the base of the tree I saw a thick layer of broken pieces of coconut, the remains of nuts opened by the Onges' teeth over the years. The strength of their bite resembles that of the African pygmies, whom I have seen hanging by their teeth from the lianas and who can dent the barrel of a gun.

The average life span of the Onges, and indeed of the Andamanese in general, is fairly short. On Little Andaman there are probably no individuals over the age of sixty, and most die before fifty. Here again they differ from African peoples of similar stature; Bushmen have been known to live to a hundred, and I saw one in Natal, incredibly wrinkled, but not shrunken, who was certainly near that age if not, as he claimed, over it. This is quite unknown in the Andamanese. There are none with white hair; although a few white hairs can sometimes be found on the head of an old woman, there are none to be seen in the men, who die younger than the women. There is no baldness, which is by no means rare in Negroes, particularly in southern Africa.

Precise age is not easy to determine in the Onges. Visual assessment is hampered by the absence of the signs of ageing common in Europeans. Moreover, a particularly child-like expression often lasts into adult life. In May 1952 I saw on Car Nicobar two Jarawa youths, small but robust, whose age by our standards one would have estimated at ten or twelve years. One turned out to be fourteen, however, and the other at least two years older, and both were adolescent, despite their childish appearance.

Males appear to reach their maximum height at about eighteen, and females at about sixteen; both sexes reach full maturity at about twenty-three. At forty-five they are old: their hard life, their unbalanced diet, with its enormous quantities of fat meat eaten in excess, and complete absence of salt, and their unrestrained sexual activity, may all be contributing factors. The slightly greater age

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twining up into the trees, and the shorter-stemmed yams, are never disturbed. The Onges merely dig down, at a respectful distance from the plant, certain of finding what they want. On no account must there be any signs of the theft for the spirit to see, so they quietly take off roots or tubers some way from the main stem and leave the rest, patting the earth down afterwards and covering the place with leaves. The guardian spirit, not, apparently, all-seeing, notices nothing, as the plant continues to flourish, improved by the root pruning. Everyone, guardian spirit and Onges alike, is happy.

This unconscious preservation may well be the result of a decree, in some remote past, by an Onge seer who realized the danger of killing off the entire plants and invented the guardian spirits as a deterrent. The Negritos still make similar use of roots and tubers; Skeet and Blagden fifty years ago referred to the Semang eating poisonous wild yams, having removed the toxic substances.[1]

It is interesting that both in the past and even today a number of peoples at a very early stage of cultural development have progressed from the gathering of the wild yams of South-East Asia to the first signs of cultivation and agriculture. It is possible that they were the first plants ever to be cultivated by primitive Man, the Negritos with their digging sticks delving then as they do now; the genus is certainly a very ancient one, and some species, such as *Dioscorea alata*, may have spread from Asia to Africa and Oceania, and even to America, with the beginning of cultivation. But this is a stage of development which the peoples of the Andaman never reached.

The digging stick, the only implement the Onges have with which to get at the roots and tubers, has in recent times been affected, though to a very limited extent by the spread of iron. Only a few individuals possess a primitive iron tool, half a metre long, cylindrical in shape and usually not more than one and a half centimetres in diameter and flattened into a form of blade at one end. The vast majority still have only the age-old stick made of hard wood, hardly recognizable as a tool and crudely fashioned into a point at one end. This tool, so primitive that it can easily be mistaken for an odd

[1] It is interesting that the American Aborigines, especially in Brazil, do the same with manioc, but I saw nothing of this nature in the Andamans.

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piece of wood, has definite uses, and none of the nomadic forest peoples anywhere in the world are without it. Everywhere it is found it is effective in filling huge baskets with food – baskets equally simply and equally quickly made. I have already described (see p. 93) the baskets made by the Onges for purely temporary use on their hunting expeditions. In the communal huts, however, the making of real baskets involves hours of careful plaiting, working the supple fibres from the strong bark of selected rushes, and expert finishing. These baskets are an invariable and prized part of every family's inheritance and are preserved for as long as possible. Nowhere in the collection of basketry from Great Andaman are there baskets with more craftsmanship than the permanent ones of the Onges.[1] All the baskets are the shape of half an egg. There is little variation in size, all being about forty centimetres in diameter at the top, and about forty-five centimetres deep, unlike the temporary carriers, which vary considerably in size, according to whether they are to be carried by men, women, or even children, and what is to be carried.

At the opposite extreme from the underground harvest of roots, men and women alike use long thin hooked poles to hook down fruit from the trees, climbing up into the trees when necessary to strip the highest branches and then hiding the poles in the forest until they are next required (no attempt is ever made to carry them about). When the tree is not too large, it is ruthlessly chopped down and stripped as it lies on the ground. I was horrified in the first fortnight of April to see this happen to trees which the Onges call *dangbecciò*, which bear blackish-red fruit about the size of a pigeon's egg. The attraction is the flavour of the pulp, but there is little of it, surrounding a large nut. To get at the pulp a thick, hard case has to be cracked, but to the formidable Onge teeth this is no problem and the case cracks comparatively easily. The nut itself is not edible; the honey-coloured pulp is sweetish, but there is so little that it takes ten fruits to provide ten grams of it. The fruits hang in bunches at the end of branches covered with leaves rather like a chestnut. As the wood is very soft, the Onges usually hack the trees down; large ones may merely have their branches lopped

[1] Editor's note: The author indicated in manuscript at this point his intention of giving a full description of the way in which these are made, but unfortunately died before he was able to do so.

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their hunting and fishing, or contacts with strangers, which are loudly chanted, accompanied by miming and dancing, during their nocturnal celebrations. One was sung and danced in my honour; Cendubai,[1] head of the Lulera hut, much struck by the sight of me in my hammock slung between two trees on nylon cords, delivered himself of a warning over the danger I was running using such thin cords. At the end of each 'verse' the refrain '*cuł-cian-ghéghełhłe-chéle*' (he will hurt himself) repeated his fear of the cords breaking.

Hunting and fishing episodes are to the Onges less interesting than themes like my safety, because to them they lack the repetitive refrain. In their dances, on the other hand, they prefer something else, to us monotonous, but for them always new, and even exciting; more than anything they love to dance the stages of courtship to its culmination, with the help of words and extraordinarily (to Western eyes regrettably) vivid gestures.

Birds, to the Onges, harbour the spirits of the dead, and it is for this reason that they are never eaten, contrary to the assertions of Brown.[2] Similar fears extend to lizards, the jungle cats, bats, rats and snakes. I have confirmed this among both the Onges and the Arioto. The latter even refused to eat some fat pigeons which I offered them not knowing of the taboo; they accepted the gifts, but the pigeons were eventually eaten by my own men. And the Onges whom I took with me to Port Blair for a few days refused point blank to eat pigeon or chicken.

The spirits select the Onges' food for them, in the sense that they regard everything as edible or poisonous, according to whether the guardian spirit is benign or malevolent. Given the curious adaptability of the spirits and the intensely practical way in which they operate it is hardly surprising that their benevolence or malignity coincides remarkably well with those foods which tend to promote normal health!

[1] I was sorry to learn that Cendubai died suddenly in 1955 aged barely forty.

[2] Curiously enough, while the Onges' fears lead them to reject out of hand any food of animal origin which is unknown to them, the same does not apply to vegetable foods. They ate half-rotten fruit, which I offered them, even though they had never seen it before, and they clamoured for rice and tea, so much so that in order to prevent them becoming addicted to the rice, as so often happens when primitive peoples meet a new food, I insisted on receiving equal quantities of yams in exchange for the rice and very sweet tea, to slow down their demands.

To truly primitive peoples like the Onges, European medical practices are fascinating. Men and women will refuse literally nothing once they are convinced of our intention to do them good and cure their ills. Although they have a rudimentary form of medicine, they recognize the superiority of European methods, and medical aid has therefore become our most powerful means of making contact with uncivilized peoples.

While I was busy trying to alleviate their ailments I became aware of the power which 'medicine' has over them, and I was also able to observe their own methods of dealing with their ills. Understandably, disease, death and birth are all attributed to particular supernatural beings, or to the spirits of the dead. They try not to offend these beings, but strive nevertheless, in their own way, at least to cure disease. Once primitive peoples see our methods they respect them, and are eager to be treated; strange though it all seems, they develop a blind faith in the omnipotence of the new ways.

There is little actual disease among the Onges and they have equally few vices. They are still unaware of the existence of alcohol, and have not learned how to ferment sugar substances, such as the honey in which the Little Andaman abounds. Tobacco is a recent introduction, and the Onges at once became wildly addicted to it; the tobacco leaves I had taken with me were in fact my best means of making my way peacefully into the island. A few Onges have acquired a supply of opium from Burmese and Chinese smugglers along the north coast, but instead of smoking it they seem to limit themselves to chewing it mixed with tobacco, and have fortunately no means of replenishing their stock.

Polio, tuberculosis, smallpox and cancer seem unknown, but for some unknown reason the islands have on a number of occasions been struck by disastrous epidemics of measles. These epidemics struck nearly every member of some of the communal huts, judging from survivors' reports, and the sites were afterwards abandoned, leaving the huts to be destroyed by termites.

The census of 1931 includes a personal observation by Portman of congenital syphilis in several Onges. This has since been proved wrong and in 1952 I found only one young man with nasal malformation possibly attributable to the disease, half-moon incisors, and abnormality of the skull and palate. I was not able to find him

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on later visits. Dr H. Lehmann found no evidence of syphilis in the fifty-two individuals of both sexes from whom he took blood samples in my presence.

Although the Onges are normally healthy and look outwardly robust, they have very little actual resistance to disease and succumb very quickly. Twenty-eight of them, whole families, young and old, whom I took with me to Port Blair in 1954 to present them to the President of the Republic of India, all developed a high fever owing to the change in their way of life during the few days it took from Little Andaman to Great Andaman, and we had to take them back hastily to their own island immediately after the official visit. Even minor feverish complaints of no importance seem to depress and terrify them so that they die very quickly, and I sometimes heard that young Onge friends whom I had left in excellent health had died suddenly from, so I was told, some febrile complaint. The Onge women have better resistance than their menfolk to disease as a whole, which may also help to explain their greater longevity.

On the other hand wounds heal surprisingly quickly in both sexes, although in some of the old men I saw purulent leg sores, slow to heal even when treated with antiseptics which I applied myself. I saw none of these in women, but they seem to be more severely attacked by ringworm, especially on the abdomen and round the umbilicus. Few of the Onges were free from ringworm but none of them bothered to treat it, and it did not seem to cause them any noticeable disturbance. In one woman I noticed whitish patches on the fingers and lips, due to leucoderma.

Diseases of the nervous system and mental illnesses seem very rare, although a few individuals are subject to attacks of epilepsy, watched reverently by all present! The Onges regard epileptics as possessed by a spirit capable of giving important information and question them like the oracle. A number of the Onge leaders, among them Giota of Tambe-e-buiè, go from time to time into a state of trance, which has every appearance of an epileptic attack. I saw one case of dementia in a middle-aged woman, but it was mild enough to allow her to go about her work reasonably well, and at regular intervals she produced normal children.

Sight and hearing in the Onges are particularly acute, as has often been reported in primitive peoples and attributed to the

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regular exercise of the two faculties required by their existence in direct contact with the natural world; anyone, it is said, who lived such a life would preserve the same keenness of eye and ear. Certainly I saw no myopia among the Onges, nor any of the eye infections common among other inhabitants of the tropics. With the naked eye they can pick out tiny craft far out to sea, or the small, narrow Onge canoes which I could hardly see with field-glasses, which makes me doubt whether constant exercise of the eyes can really be the full explanation of their power of vision. They can pick out quickly and accurately birds immobile among the dense leaves in the darkest part of the forest, invisible to me, even though I was used to looking for them and could see them when they moved. And from the ground they saw high in the trees tiny amphibia which I wanted to catch, after I had caught one by chance which had proved to be a new species. These amphibia, perfect mimics, become almost invisible when they attach themselves to the bark of the trees, but the Onges pointed them out to me from a distance with absolute accuracy, and I was in fact able in 1954 to catch over two hundred in a week.[1]

The Onges can also pick out reptiles on the ground, or among the foliage, distinguishing with long practice the poisonous varieties which abound in the islands, and I found it very useful to send Onges ahead of me in the forest to look out for these snakes. When any of my Indians were bitten it was always because they thought they could do as well as the local scouts! The Onges themselves are, however, occasionally bitten, with serious consequences. One of them, aged twenty-five, climbed into a very high tree after honey, and unwittingly put his left hand on a snake hidden in the leaves, where it had climbed to search for birds' eggs. It bit just above the elbow, causing an alarming swelling of the arm with severe pain and fever. He was brought to me semi-conscious, with the whole limb swollen to the size of a rugby ball. The unfortunate man's neck had been bound with the usual strands of *Ficus* bark, and not surprisingly he was groaning desperately, and clearly on the point of death.

The Onges have no specific remedies for snake bites, and their

[1] These amphibia were examined in 1954 at the Institute of Zoology of the University of Genoa and given the name of *Kaloula baleata ghoshi*, in honour of Mr A. K. Ghosh, then Governor of the Andamans.

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mothers offering it to the waiting children one after another in strict order. This alone would be enough to explain the spread of the devastating measles epidemics which can attack every member of a hut.

While they love the liquid fat, they despise the broth left behind, and once the meat has been eaten, a thick yellowish soup, not unpleasant, is left in the drum. The dogs love this, and rush for it, putting their paws right into the drum, fighting and snarling in their eagerness to get at it. When they have finished licking, the drum is shining clean and ready for use, with no washing up to do! Clouds of flies descend on the drums, packing into a black swarm all over the bottom and sides, eager to finish off the dogs' work. Sea or river water is often only a yard or two from camp, but no one would dream of washing anything.

Once the meat or fish is cooked, it is often hung in the roof of the hut, out of reach of the dogs. The fact that the roof is dusty and covered in spiders to foul the meat, does not matter; earth and sand get in the way of the teeth, dust and spiders do not. The Onges happily eat contaminated flesh and drink water from pools in which animal carcasses are rotting or dogs are bathing and drinking; the dogs share literally everything with their masters.

On my visits to the island I always had to fence off the wells I had dug out, to avoid a constant battle with the dogs. I always found water only a few metres down, and the dogs revelled in it. In the east, near Nachuge, I saw Onges and dogs together avidly drinking [redacted] brackish pools which stank of sulphur, although I must confess that after repeated filtration and boiling the water lost its smell and I was myself able to use it without any ill effects. My men thought it was good for the health to drink it as it was.

During all Onge orgies, and particularly the honey feasts, there is, if possible, even less regard for hygiene. Although the honey is full of wax, larvae, and a few odd bees, their brush-stick only picks up the honey itself. They have another even better way of getting out the honey. A strip of bark about one metre long and as wide as the palm of the hand is taken from a *Ficus*. This is well chewed to make it pliable, and when this is dipped into the honey mixture it emerges dripping with pure honey. Everyone bites at it avidly, young and old, men, women and children, one after another, to the last drop.

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were approaching an Onge camp. Everywhere they go they are accompanied by flies of all sizes, and in Little Andaman the swarms are so bad that the first stranger to land called a river after them, Bumila Creek, or fly river. Their flies betray the Onges long before the barking of their dogs – no human voice ever betrays their silent presence.

On Little Andaman today the Onges' tacit divisions of territory are of little importance, so heavy has been the fall in population, but they still keep out of areas belonging to other 'huts', even if the huts themselves have been abandoned. I never saw any disputes over territory, or the ownership of the area in which a pig was caught (and hence ownership of the pig). The Onges who accompanied me, possibly encouraged by the prestige value of a European with them, hunted wherever we went without anyone raising any protests. Nevertheless, I always took the precaution of giving anything I or my Indians took to the Onges of the nearest hut, invariably much to their delight.

Contrary to established opinion, communal huts on Little Andaman are not found only along the coasts; the majority, and certainly the best constructed, are in the interior. Togalanghe is one, and there are a number of permanently abandoned temporary camps near it.

Both the permanent and temporary huts or shelters of the Andamans resemble those of the Semang. The latter are extremely simple, especially in the dry season; there are no walls and only a very sloping roof of leaves, high at the front and very low at the back, the beds being put so that the feet face the low part of the roof. With the Semang and Aeta the beds may be made of bamboo; this is never the case in the Andamans, as there are no large bamboos in the archipelago (Brown was wrong in this respect. The few slender bamboos on Little Andaman are only usable for making drying racks, which are found only round the hut at Beniabol in the south. As the people were away when I went there, and the site was consequently completely deserted, I was unable to establish visually what they dried, but traces of fish, particularly pilchards, were indication enough.)

These temporary shelters are put up extremely quickly. Two poles less than two metres long for the front, and two more, thirty to forty centimetres long, for the back, are fixed firmly into the

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114
142
291
854
482

1 The author with two adult islanders

[facing P. 66, A]

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and Totamaddulù, the first a day's journey into the forest from Berié-Abdalù, the second two days from Labanar, and the others both near Togalanghe.

On both Great Andaman and Little Andaman the kitchen-middens yield a vast quantity of animal remains, bones and a great number of shells, with very little earth. The shells diminish in the upper levels, to be replaced by bones of *Sus andamanensis*, the wild pig of the islands, the change coinciding with the arrival of the dog in the islands; the revolution which this introduction brought into the life of the islanders is at once evident.

My first excavations in 1951 were limited to establishing which mounds looked promising for future digs. I made soundings in the north, middle and south of Great Andaman and found that near each midden there were invariably abundant food supplies, as well as fresh water, sometimes running, sometimes in pools. The excavations went on for sixty days, aided by a first-class gang of men from Bihar, who even agreed, in view of the necessity of concentrated digging, to forgo their customary feast days. To these preliminary excavations I returned later on a number of occasions,[1] using them as controls.

My first real dig began on 5 January 1952 in a fine midden on Middle Andaman, a few hours' march from the forest station of Long Island, at a place known as Beehive Hill, or Golpahar in Hindi. The water pipe installed for the benefit of the colonists on Long Island draws from a spring, and on its way to the reservoir on the shore it runs right through the centre of the midden. Emerging, it runs for a hundred and fifty metres through a mangrove swamp stinking with vile black mud, which in fact served as an excellent means of dating the layers, by relating them to the rise and fall in the ground level of the swamp over the last few thousands of years.

The whole of the time we were there we had to work with look-outs posted ready for any Jarawas trying an ambush; to the north of the midden the grave of a Burmese killed by them a short time before was a grim warning. We did a great deal of shooting, but fortunately only for game. Fallow deer descended from imported

[1] With a number of young Indians very kindly allocated to my assistance by the anthropological service of the Government of India, and to all of whom I am greatly indebted for their enthusiastic help, often under the most trying conditions.

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beasts were plentiful, and used to come right up to the camp out of curiosity, in spite of the noise of the shooting, and my men took so many that they were able to dry and smoke some for future use. There were flocks of pigeons after the fruit in the *Ficus* trees, and another rather smaller bird with green wings (*àriel* in Hindi). There were always large fish lying quietly on the surface of the sea, only two hundred metres from the dig, so that we could shoot these as well. The Jarawas were kept at bay, we all fed very well, and everyone was highly satisfied!

The camp was surrounded night and day by a chorus of frogs, and the lights of the camp attracted a whole army of hermit crabs; in the dry season they made an incredible noise parading up and down the dry leaves, even rummaging round our beds inside the tents while we were trying to get to sleep. They disappeared, suddenly and completely, immediately the rains came. Like the rest of their species they use their claws to close the shells in which they have made their home. Usually the large claw was able to do the job alone, but in case of difficulty they would bring the other claw and even their legs into the battle, until they managed to close the shell completely (my men enjoyed these struggles immensely). They in fact use various shells, and squeeze into them somehow, even into the cowries. Some varieties use nothing but cowries and their claws and legs have become very slender in adapting themselves to the narrow shell.

Unlike the hermit crabs, the rats were not affected by the seasons and came after our stores in hordes. I collected a number of species, but I was never able to catch one kind which particularly interested me. It was a jumping variety, graceful and rather larger than our mouse, with big ears, and a very pointed muzzle. The front feet were short, almost atrophied, and the back ones long, with strong, powerfully muscled haunches, so that the creature was rather like the rats of the pyramids in miniature. I often surprised them round my tent if I shone a torch suddenly, but they would bound away out of reach on their hind legs and no traps seemed to attract them. This variety does not seem to have been reported, at least in the Andamans, and it was the only one I was never able to catch.

When the rains came the disappearance of the hermit crabs was matched by the equally sudden appearance of curious cicadas, which chirped intermittently like all those in the Andamans. By the

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end of June 1953 there were legions of them. In contrast to the frogs, who were completely silent unless the atmosphere was calm, these cicadas only chirped when it was pouring with rain and blowing a gale, and then only at dawn and at dusk. Unlike other Asiatic species, they hopped from tree to tree between their momentary bursts of chirping, so that from minute to minute the chirping moved en bloc and made it almost impossible to catch them. When they were silent they were completely invisible against the branches, so that although we knew they were motionless we were still unable to catch them.

Surrounded by these diversions we began digging seriously. I must make it clear from the outset that in recording my findings I make no claim to saying the last word on the subject. All I hope to do is to report what I have been able to deduce from the combination of my personal observations of islanders as they are today and the evidence which I found in their kitchen-middens both of the past and of the present.

Though not as large as some I found later, the midden at Golpahar, like all the rest, was a truncated cone, beaten into a dome by the monsoons, and at the time of my excavation it was about five metres high with a circumference of a hundred and ten metres and a diameter of thirty-six metres. I removed half, leaving the other half so that others might later check my findings.

Ninety per cent of the contents proved to be shells, chiefly bivalves, and mainly *Cyrena*. As the shell content was clearly fairly constant I tried to calculate the total in the whole midden; and by taking into account the nomadic life of the present-day inhabitants of the island, and their eating habits, it was possible to reach a reasonable estimate of the age of the deposit.

Each midden can be regarded as attributable to the food refuse of groups of thirty to forty people, living at the site for forty to fifty days a year or less. Shellfish can never have been the islanders' sole diet. They are certainly not today – shellfish of any kind are only eaten when there is nothing else to be had, and then only in certain localities where it is not too much trouble to carry them to the camp. In other words, although shells formed the greater part of the deposit, they will only have been added to it sporadically. In the absence of some complete change of habits, unlikely in such cautious people as the Andamanese, we may deduce that the midden

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been cooked in the same way; the bones are never charred, but always have the appearance of being cooked in an earth oven. The direct roasting of large game over the fire, postulated by some authorities, including Brown, was never practised; the islanders preferred to go on as they had done since time immemorial, because it was more efficient – witness the traces of the earth oven which are to be found all over the world, including Europe. In Polynesia and Micronesia, and among the pygmies of Asia and Africa, it was widely used; variations when they arose did so as the result of local circumstances, like that of throwing water on the fire instead of using fleshy leaves, when there were none in the area. But the basic principle remained the same everywhere, and the use of the earth oven coincides with the geographical distribution of hunting, gathering and burial customs similar to those found in the Andamans.

In April 1954 I excavated the midden at Tambe-e-buiè on Little Andaman, abandoned after the earth tremors of 1951, to investigate the position of the beds. The custom of burying the dead underneath their beds made it possible to trace the latter by the human remains below them, arranged in a circle round the periphery. The Onges themselves helped in the work, sometimes even trying to recognize the remains as they came to light.[1] There were clear signs of reburial. The body is buried immediately after death at least one metre deep; whereas after exhumation, cleaning and colouring, it is never re-interred more than thirty centimetres below the floor of the hut. When another death makes it necessary for a new grave to be dug under the bed, the piles of bones from the second are disturbed, so that in time a form of ossuary develops. In this it is not possible to identify the various remains of individuals unless some change in the position of the hut, even by a few metres, preserves the bones from disturbance by fresh graves. Traces of the graves always remain, however, as they are invariably filled with fresh earth.

We have already seen that on Little Andaman the introduction of the dog reduced the consumption of shellfish (and hence the rate

[1] The material recovered is now in the Anthropological Museum of the Andamans and Nicobars, which I helped to establish at Port Blair. The museum was inaugurated on 6 June 1955 in the presence of the Governor, Mr A. K. Ghosh and the chief Indian officials of the town.

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two have added feathers, and poisoned tips, in imitation of neighbouring peoples.

For the capture of large fish and animals such as turtles, dolphins and dugong, the Onges and Arioto use not the arrow harpoon but the spear harpoon. Brown saw none of these among the Onges he studied in Rutland, and consequently assumed its absence on Little Andaman. The Onges carry as little as possible on their sea voyages for the sake of speed, and would not therefore take spear harpoons (used only for marine hunting) with them on trips to Rutland, which they visit only for the purpose of hunting pigs and not to fish, or to hunt marine animals. They certainly have, and use, spear harpoons even today; I myself have been with the Onges and seen their harpoons used from the canoes. I had ample opportunity to admire both the effectiveness of the weapons and the accuracy of the throwers.

The greater structural and operational simplicity of the spear harpoon, in comparison with the arrow harpoon, leads one to suppose it the older of the two. Its cord is made of tough *Hibiscus* fibres, and with the aid of these and a straight shaft about six metres long and little over four centimetres in diameter, even the humblest of nails, seven centimetres long and three millimetres in diameter, can become the point of a spear harpoon. It is fixed into the shaft (usually of mangrove wood) which is hollowed out at the thinner end to take it, and with a cord up to a hundred metres long or more attached to the nail two centimetres from the head, the spear harpoon is ready for use – shaft, point and cord.

When the harpoon is to be used for turtles, no barbs are needed, as the point is driven so firmly into the shell that blocks of wood have to be carried in the canoes to knock it out for re-use.

The harpoon throwers stand ready on the platform jutting out fore and aft of the canoes (see p. 122), the free end of the cord is tied to one of the booms to prevent it being jerked out of the canoe as the victim tries to escape, and the slack is coiled in the bottom of the canoe. The thrower holds the cord against the harpoon as he waits for the right moment and then throws. As the harpoon strikes, the point detaches from the shaft, which floats on the water till picked up – often to be used as a punt-pole in the shallow waters of the coral reefs as the canoe follows the victim, now held firmly on the end of the cord.

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comparatively rapid variation and it is now difficult to establish their linguistic connections outside the Andamans, but Africa can certainly be discounted, in view of the general weight of evidence against any Negro ancestry.

Like the Onges the Jarawas are divided into endogamous groups, each with its own name, corresponding to their communal huts, and each with their own territory for the purposes of hunting, fishing and gathering food. There is little reliable information about their daily life or even their numbers; it is, however, certain and I cannot overstress this, that the Jarawas are Negrito in type,[1] with the same admixture as in the Onges.

Whoever or whatever they may be, the replacement of primitive expeditions by genuine attempts at pacification would, quite apart from the obvious humanitarian considerations involved, afford a unique opportunity for detailed study of a dying population in regeneration, and the refusal of an otherwise irrevocable progress towards final extinction.

But the problem of the Jarawas is merely one aspect of the problem of the Andamanese in general, and their connection with the Negritos both past and present. The Semang and the Aetà, as we have seen, resemble each other, and together resemble the Andamanese, in a number of essential points. Recent contacts with other influences in Malacca and the Philippines respectively have produced variations – such as the Semang use of traps and snares with which they take small animals, and also birds, which the Andamanese never touch. They have also taken to making refuges in the trees as a defence against wild animals, non-existent in the Andamans. Traps, poison, agriculture, fish-hooks, animal nets, are all late acquisitions, not found among the original Negritos. It was thought by Brown that spears, used by the Semang, were also unknown among the peoples of the Andamans, but I have myself seen them used by the Onges, though admittedly I saw only a few, and very rough specimens; I did, however, manage to bring some back with me.

In the case of the canoes, the Semang and the Aetà seem to have

[1] On 11 January 1951 a Jarawa was killed at Lekeralarta on Middle Andaman and the head is now in the Indian Museum in Calcutta. This head shows signs of beard, unlike those of two Jarawas held in the Nicobars since the September 1938 incident. Short, muscularly well-developed, strong and very black, Jarawas are normally beardless, as is usual in Negritos.

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thought they were weeds and pulled them up. I never managed to see the plant in flower in the wild state, as this occurs at the height of the rainy season, and as no final definition is possible in the absence of the flower it remains unidentified.

The Onges take full advantage of the plant's properties as a bee-deterrent and in mid-March they eat honey, paint themselves, and dance, twenty-four hours a day. During these orgies I have seen a group of about sixty Onges demolish in a few days ten pigs and a dozen large, wooden vessels full of honey, with basket after basket of fish, caught every night by the women, who were apparently not in the least tired by the long daily treks into the forest after the honey. I can never look back on the Onges without a feeling of profound respect for their powers of digestion!

Yet another source of food for the islanders is the cicada. On Little Andaman there are a few species a little larger than the European variety and others rather smaller. The Onges collect the pupae as they emerge from the ground, usually in the mornings, and roast them as a great treat. They are actually very clean insects, which develop slowly under the earth over a period of years sucking lymph from the roots of the trees. When they emerge from the ground the pupae become leathery, but this presents no problem to the indomitable teeth of the Onges. Inside the cicada chrysalids are a mass of delicate tissues, so white and clean that one can understand the Onges' predilection for them.

On Little Andaman the cicadas chirp intermittently, with long silences; most of the day one hears nothing of them and when they suddenly start up the Onges fall absolutely quiet, terrified of frightening them away and losing their chrysalids.[1] In a few moments the whole forest suddenly echoes with a chorus of cicadas, as they all start up as one and then, a minute later, fall silent. Their intermittent chirping is not confined to the Andamans; it is a feature of several species throughout southern Asia. At Golpahar when I was in the middle of the forest excavating kitchen-middens I heard cicadas start up every day at 6.30 p.m., and then stop until the following day. In the mountains of South India, on the slopes

[1] The Onges do not seem to share the superstitions reported by Man and Brown among the Arioto, who appear to believe in fantastic connections between cicadas, the sun, and storms.

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I examined a number of canoes drawn up on the beach. They varied in size from some eight to ten metres long, built to carry twenty people, to small single-manned craft three to four metres long, and there were some very small ones clearly intended to encourage the children to set out on their own. The very large canoes are, however, rare. The beam also varied considerably from some barely wide enough to admit a man's knees to others of one and a half metres or more.[1]

In the shallows, contrary to some assertions, paddles are never used; the booms would make alternate paddling extremely difficult. Reversed harpoon shafts are instead used as punt poles and oars, usually made of *Myristica longifolia*, are used only in deep water. They are sometimes but not always lashed into the holes in the gunwale through which the booms pass. They are short, not more than 1·3 metres long and are always rowed forwards (obviously there would be a danger of stubbing a reef if the European style of rowing was used). Like the canoes, the oars vary somewhat in size. Very roughly made they consist of a handle ninety centimetres long and a forty-centimetre blade. The grip tapers almost to a point and increases gradually in diameter towards the blade, which is long, narrow, blunt-ended and flat-convex in section. Usually it is merely roughly shaped with the Onges' crude hatchet, but occasionally it is smoothed off with a sharp *Cyrena* shell. The helmsman and pilot stand on the two platforms, guiding the canoe with oars. As far as possible the rowers avoid the side bearing the outrigger mechanism; any deviation of course caused by the unilateral rowing is corrected by the two steersmen.

When they first launch a canoe the Onges decorate it with ochre designs like those on their bodies and the hollowed logs used to hold honey, although they are washed off as soon as the craft enters the water. As usual the men do all the work up to that point and the women do the painting. The initial painting is the only form of ornament on the canoes; there is not even a mark of ownership, although each canoe is curiously enough recognized as the property of one man, despite the fact that everyone has helped to

[1] I am unable to agree with Brown that the Onge canoes are extremely small, that they have bow and stern, and that their floats are inefficient. My own experiences of travelling in the canoes has led me to the opinion that on these and other points Brown was wrong, possibly partly because he never actually visited Little Andaman.

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for them and feeding them on the table. As soon as they saw worms wriggling, they would move cautiously towards them and then snap them up like lightning. They became used to sitting in my hand quite undisturbed, looking round in two directions at once in an interested way. Flies held by the wings fascinated them more than anything, and they used to stare at the insects as though hoping to mesmerize them. They made delightful pets.

More prosaically, they are very good fried. Outside Little Andaman I found hundreds every day near Golpahar on Middle Andaman, and as the fish market in Port Blair was over a day's journey away we used many for non-scientific purposes.

Dugong, monitors, snakes, jungle cats, bats, leeches – all abound in Little Andaman and I had ample opportunities to study them. The dugong are well known to the Onges, but I only saw them at Bumila Creek (Cuateniabo) and Jackson Creek, where I did not have the time to catch any; the Onges tried, but without result.

Dugong (from the Malayan *Dyong*, introduced into scientific Latin as the family Dugongidae), are large mammals of the order *Sirenia*. They have a short fish-like body, with closeable nostrils above a cavernous mouth, which is surrounded by short bristly whiskers and armed with a brush-like, horny plate. In the male two short tusks hang down each side of the mouth, like a miniature hippopotamus, giving the animals a cumbersome, ugly look. The Onges prize the dugong, but rarely manage to capture one; when they do, there is great feasting. I was never able to try it, or even acquire any really close observations of the creatures.

Monitors or dragon-lizards, on the other hand were under my feet every day, although the islanders never eat them. I used to put out as bait fish or pig carcasses rejected by the Onges as being too lean, and we could then shoot as many as we wanted as they rushed to the bait from all sides. I collected their skins for various museums, using the carcasses as further bait.

The Andamanese variety is well known and it closely resembles *Varanus niloticus*, the Nile monitor, to which it is related. The largest can be two metres long, including the long, very tapering tail. As they approach their prey, sniffing at it, their forked tongue, twice the length of the head, flashes in and out of its sheath with incredible speed. Although they have strong legs they move slowly and it is easy to catch them by the tail, providing one takes care to

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in the division of all meat. Certain cuts are the property of the hunter, of his helpers, and of his relations and after them, in order, of the remaining members of the group; everyone knows his position in advance. Each portion is tied round with a reed fibre, which is allowed to dangle out over the top of the communal cooking-pot ready to haul the meat out when required.

In the case of pork the prized cut is one which comprises the kidneys and the surrounding fat; this fat is called *cian*,[1] and is very highly esteemed. Some authors (Brown, for example) have stated that turtles and pigs are always cut up with the head ritually pointing towards the sea as otherwise the meat would be considered inedible. This is certainly not the case on Little Andaman, and I have never seen any such directional ritual among any of the Negritos, all of whom practise division of meat according to a prescribed order of precedence. Turtles at any rate are slaughtered facing up the sloping beach simply because it is then easier to hold the beast from behind and avoid its bite. Ritual there is, but usually with a good practical basis.

More ritual attaches to the way in which the game is carried back to the camp, and the wood to be used for the cooking fire. Pigs, killed and gutted, are tied in ropes made of *Ficus laccifera* and carried somehow on the back of the victorious hunter. If it is not far to the camp he will not bother to tie up the snout and feet, but otherwise the front and back legs are tied, and one long cord joins both pairs to the snout – again a practical ritual, giving the hunter a more compact weight to carry.

Man, Portman, Brown and others all say that each type of game has to be cooked over a fire of a particular wood. My own observations showed that whereas the ritual of dissection is inviolable, the Onges always use the first wood that comes to hand, regardless of its source, taking as usual the line of least resistance. This is again in keeping with the tendency of primitive peoples to expend only the very minimum of energy to achieve their object. Their religious beliefs and superstitions are not carried to the limit, simply because

[1] It is interesting that in their very restricted world the Onges have few standards of comparison or words to express condemnation or approval, and this word *cian* is used as one of high praise, applied to inanimate objects, animals, and people alike. The precise qualities which are conveyed by the word are difficult to evaluate in the absence of fuller knowledge of the Onge language.

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Brown states that dugong skulls are found among the hunting trophies of the Andamanese. I can myself vouch for the fact that this is not the case among the Onges or the twenty-three surviving Arioto; both keep dugong jaws and long bones, but the skulls of only pigs and turtles. The Andamanese in general do not regard animal bones as having the same protective powers as human; the existence in the Andamans of any magical practices connected with either animal or human bones has not, in my view, been adequately proved. In the absence of such proof I feel unable to agree with the authors who assert that these practices do exist, and I am inclined to feel that the cultural level of the peoples of the Andamans is so low as to rule out the existence of magic or witchcraft in any form.

From the mass of data of all kinds I was able to collect on my trips to the Andamans, a general pattern emerges from which it is possible to draw substantial conclusions as to the cultural and somatic origins of the Onges and hence of the other peoples of the archipelago. To summarize these conclusions must inevitably involve some repetition of what has been said in previous chapters.

Taking first the people of the Nicobar Islands, the nearest geographically to the Andamanese, it is generally accepted that with the exception of the Shom-Pen of Great Nicobar the Nicobarese are culturally closely similar. Although there are no pure Negrito types in the Nicobars there are evident crosses, similar to those which appear in one area of Sumatra to the east, where a small Negrito component exists among a predominantly mongoloid type. This may well be the result of the Negritos having spread at one time over a very wide area and there is in fact cultural evidence in support of the suggestion.

The mongoloid somatic type of the Nicobars appears in the general shape and proportions of the body, skin colour, facial contours, and the hair, which is long and straight, unlike that of the Negritos. Both types, however, have scant body hair, and differ in this respect from the pygmies of Africa.

Although the size and skin colour of most Nicobarese is very different from the Onges, a few are strikingly like them in facial contours, size, and woolly hair. There are also legends of a people who lived in the Nicobars long ago, small, very black, with tight

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way in which the spirits are invoked against enemies, involving the use of some personal possession – an example is the invariable destruction of the used *naquineghe*, or of hair after shaving. The same fear of the night induced by the idea of spirits walking abroad led to the making of torches from rolled palm leaves containing a mixture of embers and resin.

From the Andamans to Oceania the chief spirit is generally imagined in the form of a giant lizard, living at the top of the sky and ruling the storms; none of the peoples who believe in him ever eat any lizard or lizard-like creature. All of them have the same sexually suggestive dances, both male and female, sometimes inspired by the monitor or dragon-lizard, symbol of desire, and often associated with miming and dramatic representations of real and imaginary scenes. These dances, with their *joie de vivre*, are accompanied by the smoking of aromatic leaves in pipes which are frequently made from natural objects such as the claws of crustacea. The Onges in fact have since very ancient times used only this type as shown in the lower levels of the kitchen-middens dating back at least five thousand years. Everywhere, pipes of this kind are used indiscriminately by both sexes, passing from mouth to mouth. Pipes identical in every way with those of the Onges are found to the east of the archipelago, well into Oceania, and I have myself also seen them on Melville Island, north of Australia, always with the same notches for the teeth to grip. This undeniable evidence of the spread of identical pipes over so wide an area long before the possibility of European contacts cannot in my opinion be attributed other than to migration over vast distances in very ancient times.

Similar coincidences apply in the case of the arrow harpoon and indeed harpoons in general. I cannot agree with Brown in his assertion that the harpoon dates from the arrival of European influences, which brought the use of iron; the harpoon points made by long and patient working of *Tridacna* shells which I found in the kitchen-middens of the Andamans are in my view enough to refute the theory.

The canoes from which these harpoons are used, with the absence of distinction between bow and stern and the single float on the lee side, are extremely typical. They are identical in peoples which have been widely separated for a very long time and appear not only on the Andamans, and as far as Oceania, but also in North

dead were buried securely bound in a knee-to-chest position, still the custom among the Andamanese). The Onges go no further than this and the idea of a Lord of the Spirits who rules all things, although on Great Andaman there has been some progress towards more anthropomorphic concepts. The complete absence of any form of cult, prayer, representation, or votive offering cannot, I feel, be the result of cultural decline from a more advanced age; this would have resulted in gross distortion and illogical superstition, but not in complete absence of any 'religious' practices of any kind.

18 SACRIFICE

No sacrifices of any kind are practised in the Andamans, nor is there any concept of propitiation, although there is evidence that even in the late Palaeolithic era some form of ritual sacrifice was practised, at least in Europe and probably over a much wider area. One would assume from this, and from paragraph 17 above, that the Andamanese is an even older culture.

19 TABOOS

Although my own experiences among the Onges have led me to think that taboos do not exist, some authors have asserted (in my view wrongly) their existence on Great Andaman. It is not, however, possible to draw any reliable conclusions on this point.

20 CEREMONIAL

The complete absence of any form of ritual surrounding birth, the purification of women, initiation, etc., or evidence of any such ritual in the past, is striking, in view of the prevalence in all the surrounding areas of strictly observed ceremonial for many occasions. As in the case of religion, such complete absence can only mean that the Andamanese became isolated before the idea of ritual spread to the area.

21 MEASUREMENT

The Andamanese have no means of counting, and no words to express gradations of time or size; to them everything is either 'small' or 'big'. They take no interest in the passing of years, and have no idea of their own age. To them life is but the passing of the seasons and the harvests of game and fish and fruits that they bring. This utter lack of any sense